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THE

SISTERS OF SOLEURE.

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THE
SISTERS OF SOLEURE:

A Tale of the Sixteenth Century.

BY
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THE SISTERS OF SOLEURE.

CHAPTER I.

IN the year 1579, in the evening of a soft September day, I must beg my readers to accompany me to the hall of a small castle in the canton of Soleure, in Switzerland.

It was a long, high room, lighted by two rows of narrow windows, placed one above the other, the lower row being not less than six feet from the ground.

A third part of the floor was raised a step higher than the remainder, and was covered with a carpet. A large table, which usually stood in the centre of the dais, had been drawn on one side to make way for a heavy couch, placed near the edge of the carpet, that its occupant might receive warmth from the huge fireplace which occupied the middle part of the wall opposite the windows. On the hearth, some huge pine logs were burning. At one end of the hall hung

three pictures, the centre one representing a man in armour. The other two were figures of ladies in high frills and square boddices, with large eyes and sallow complexions. On the opposite wall were suspended various tattered banners, some rusty armour, and one of the long horns used by the Alpine shepherds to call their flocks together when scattered upon the mountains. A large table near the fireplace, a small one near the couch, sundry high-back chairs, and stools and benches scattered about, completed the furniture of this somewhat gloomy and comfortless apartment. Two silver lamps, placed on the small table, lighted that part of the room near the couch; but as the twilight deepened into night, the windows, with their uncurtained faces, looked higher and darker, and the lower end of the hall was shrouded in gloom, except when the logs with which, from time to time, the fire was replenished, blazing up into sudden flame, cast a flickering and uncertain glare into the dark corners, and threw the tattered banners into grotesque shadows upon the wall.

But no eye regarded these changes. The sole occupant of the hall was too deeply engrossed with her own thoughts to cast a glance at outward objects.

Extended on the couch lay a lady, evidently in middle life, whose pale features and attenuated frame still gave an idea of the grace and beauty which had once been hers in an eminent degree. The hollow

cough which occasionally broke the stillness of the room, and the whole aspect of the invalid, indicated too surely the presence of that fatal disease—consumption.

She had expressed a desire for sleep in order to be left alone, but she had only closed her eyes—her mind was too painfully occupied to permit her to sleep.

Death, she knew, was not far off. For herself she feared him not; but she had a husband and two fair daughters to leave; and for the latter she wept such tears as happily few dying mothers have cause to shed.

She was a member of the Reformed Church; her husband was a steady and determined Romanist. Passionate love on his part, desolation and utter defencelessness on hers, had led her early in life to unite herself to one whose power could, and whose love promised to shield her from the dangers of an orphan state. And his love had never failed, though for months together they had been parted: he, engaged in active service with the armies of the Duke of Savoy, and in high honour with his master; she, occupied in quietly watching over the health and education of her children on his estate in Soleure.

Warmly bigoted to the Church of Rome were both the Duke and Duchess of Savoy, and the simple fact of the religion of the lady of Count Julien prevented her sharing any portion of the regard bestowed upon her husband; but, after her death, she doubted

not that the kindly heart of the Duchess would incline her to desire the attendance at court of the daughters of her old and faithful servant—and how, without a mother's care, would these young girls be able to resist the fascinations and temptations to which they would be exposed?

Such thoughts were not new to the poor mother; but her sense of duty to her husband had prevented her from laying all her anxieties before their children. Besides, much as she loved them and they loved her, the manners of that age prevented the free interchange of feeling which makes the homes of our day so happy and so sheltered. Children treated with openness, and, as years roll on, with friendship, by their parents, cling more and more closely, and yet respectfully, around those who deal thus wisely with them. Blessed—thrice blessed!—is the influence of a Christian, loving mother; and when to this is added the strong affection and wise leading of a Christian father, the home so adorned is indeed a sheltered one.

Religious differences in parents form necessarily a painful and effectual barrier to union and openness. But the wife of Count Julien possessed the exquisite tact which enabled her to hold up the father of her daughters as the object of their highest reverence and love, while she instilled as decidedly as possible into their youthful minds principles entirely opposed to the religion he professed.

The Countess had laboured to keep her children from error by filling their minds with truth. She had carefully abstained from all abuse of her husband's religion, nor had she ever brought before them any of those fearful histories of persecution with which the annals of Rome abound, and in which her true followers glory. But as the time drew near that she must die, she was resolved to open to her children certain passages in her own history which she had hitherto kept from them, and this evening she had directed that they should be ready to attend her for the recital.

Between the thoughts of the past and the dread of the future, she had been almost overpowered; but she was a Christian. It was not long before her trust in her heavenly Father's love, and her faith in His promises, came to her aid in this dark hour of anguish.

She poured out her heart in prayer and was comforted. She had a painful duty to perform, and she prayed for strength and grace to fulfil it aright.

After a while the nurse crept in.

"I am not asleep, Marien," said the lady. "Are my daughters ready?"

"They only await your commands, dearest lady."

"You have told them my request that they will not agitate me? Poor children!" she added, sighing, "how little do they realise that they will so soon be motherless!"

The nurse could reply only with her tears. She had lived in the castle since the elder of the two daughters of the Countess had required her services as a foster-mother, and her love to her mistress was unbounded.

“Bring some of that cordial, nurse. Raise my pillows;—and now call my children.”

Presently the two girls entered, with their embroidery-frames in their hands, as she had desired.

Marie, the elder, was a tall, slight, graceful girl of eighteen. Beatrice, two years younger, small, exquisitely formed, and with a face upon which all who gazed on it loved to dwell.

The poor mother's voice faltered as they knelt to receive her blessing, and her hands trembled as she laid them on their heads. It was but a moment's weakness. She smiled as they rose from their knees and stood beside her; but seeing that they could scarcely restrain their tears, she withheld every expression of affection, except one loving kiss which she gave to each.

“Sit down, dear girls,” said she; “I have much I wish to say to you.”

Marien brought chairs, and having placed them near the small table, retired.

The girls bent over their frames to conceal their starting tears.

Their mother gazed at them with inexpressible

affection, and then, shading her eyes with her hand, she began :—

“ I have never told you anything of my own early years, my children. It was not for you to inquire into your mother’s history. I should not now open it out to you unless I were likely to leave you. But there is that which no tongue but mine should impart to you.”

She remained perfectly still for a few moments. The castle clock struck the hour of seven. Her eyes were closed. At length, in a low voice, she continued :—

“ I see it now—it can never be effaced from my memory—the chalet in the mountains in which I lived with my dear father. In the valley of Lauterbrunnen, in the Bernese Alps, was I born.”


She stopped. A look of pain passed over her face. Her hollow cough alone broke the stillness of the room.

“ This warns me,” continued she, “ that I must spare my voice as much as possible. I once began to write a little account of my birthplace and early years, in case I should be removed suddenly from you. I never finished it. Read, Marie, what I wrote.”

Marie, taking a paper from her hand, read as follows :—

“ If you pass from this valley through the defile which bounds our view to the right, few are the sum-

mer days from which you cannot see in the horizon a range of mountains, with their sunny heads rising like clouds into the sky. They are the Bernese Alps. I sometimes think that one breeze from those mountains would cure my complaint—one draught from their mountain streams refresh me more than buckets from the tamer waters of the valleys here. Yet should I shudder at the blasts that blow down in winter from their frozen summits. The valley of Lauterbrunnen is high among these mountains. From the lakes below, the ascent is so continuous, and so steep, that it seems to the traveller as if he would be lost in the clouds before my native valley is attained. Magnificent pine-forests clothe the hills to their summits. Dashing and roaring waters rush down their sides, sometimes in heavy cascades, sometimes in the deep beds of rivers. Abrupt rocks frown at every turn, and seem inclined to fall and crush the daring traveller who ventures to scale the defile. Once reached, my native valley appears sheltered from the stir and turmoil of this lower world, and might be supposed, indeed, to be the abode of happiness and peace. The entrance to it is through a narrow defile, which opens gradually into a vast basin. The rays of even a summer sun scarcely reach the bottom of it till the day is far advanced. How often have I seen his first rays tip with exquisite rosy light the edge of the rock high above the entrance to the valley. As the basin



becomes broader, the hills fall away around, and discover a little village, with a small church in the centre. Each cottage stands within its own field or garden; and large trees, scattered here and there, afford shelter to the children in their summer plays. High up the mountain's side dwellings are to be found, till the soil becomes unfit for cultivation.

" In summer, some of the shepherds, aided by their children, take up the flocks to seek for pasture on the higher parts of the mountains, and bring them down each night for shelter; while some spend weeks together among the hill-tops with no other companions than their flocks and watch-dogs. Besides the produce of the fields and gardens, the cows, goats, and sheep afforded all we required for sustenance and clothing. Our wants were few.

" My father was the pastor of that village — by night and by day the friend and adviser of this people. They loved him, and well he deserved their love. During the winter season he instructed them in reading and writing, and in summer shared with them their labours among their flocks and gardens. My sister and myself were trained, like the other mountain maidens, in habits of usefulness and self-denial, and our father instructed us, from the few books which he possessed and he prized most highly, in the history of our own and the neighbouring countries. He encouraged us in the study of music, and taught us to

distinguish the various flowers with which the hills abounded, by their names and uses, and made us well acquainted with all the productions of our beautiful mountains. My father was one of the first who had embraced the new religion, as it was called. It was brought in by Luther and Zwingli. He was a young man when he first heard Zwingli preach—just beginning to minister to a flock of his own. He received a Bible, and read it with eagerness, and fully embraced its doctrines (for Luther's doctrines are the doctrines of the Bible). He never formally separated from the Romish Church. He was soon weary of the fightings for the truth, which desolated many of the valleys; and hearing of a flock in the mountains that had no pastor, he found his way to Lauterbrunnen, and was received with delight by the peasants, who had formerly to wander into the valley for religious help and teaching, or depended on occasional visits from the monks of Interlachen. In the course of a short time they had to enlarge their former chapel, and near it they built a house for my father. I need scarcely tell you that, in the enlarged chapel, the images of the Virgin Mother and Child were not restored. My father made his flock well acquainted with the Reformed faith, but respected the prejudices of the aged, especially among the women, who still clung to the worship of the Virgin, who they believed had helped them through so many troubles. He for-

bore to abuse their deeply-rooted errors, and strove to exclude the Virgin from worship, by exalting not only the emblem of the Saviour's sufferings, but the Saviour himself, as the object deserving their deepest gratitude, and as the only author of their salvation.

"He married one of the mountain maidens, an orphan; humble, truly religious, beautiful, I have heard she was, but she died at the birth of my sister, who was two years younger than myself. Ah, my sister! my sister! would we were again together as in our days of youth, when we had no thoughts hidden from each other—gone, gone—worse than dead! Night and day have I prayed for thee! On that subject I cannot write.

"Years passed by unheeded. We grew on, my sister and I, and in our father we had all a mother's as well as a father's love. I needed no more. Then the spoiler came. How can I tell the tale? In one of the many struggles for victory between the Romanists and the members of the faith we profess, a band entered our valley. Christians call you them? No. Robbers, spoilers, murderers, led on by one who knew every cottage in the place too well. He urged them on; all brethren of the same nation—the same blood. They broke into every house—spoiled and murdered. The infants and the mothers were scarcely spared. A smiling happy village in the morning was, in a few hours, a desolate ruin.

"My father was in the church, and surrounded by his usual congregation, when the band of spoilers rushed in. They tore him from the very steps of the altar! They seized him and dragged him away!"

Here the narrative broke off abruptly.

"I could not write it, Marie," said the Countess; "I must tell you the rest."

She raised herself from among the pillows, her face flushed with unnatural excitement. The remembrance of the scene had roused her. The force of mind overcame the bodily weakness. In a strong voice she continued—

"I had gone up the mountain's side, at my father's request, to visit a sick woman. I was sitting by her bed, when one of the village children rushed into the room, and, flinging herself into my arms, told me, in broken accents, what had happened. My father was my sole thought. I flew down the path that led to the village, and when I reached it, oh, what a sight! I passed our happy home—it was burning still. Flames were issuing from the church; people were rushing frantically about—mothers, with little ones clinging to them; the dead and the dying scattered everywhere. My father! Where was he? I heard voices say, 'They have carried the pastor with them.' I followed down the defile, the river roaring and dashing by my side, and the tall pines waving over my head. I saw them not—I heard them not, at the time,

but their mournful sound mingles in my horrible memory of that day. League after league I hurried on. I had never been so far from home; yet on I went; not a person I saw. Suddenly I heard a cry—such a sound of agony—it was my father's voice. I had never heard such a sound from him before, but I felt it was his voice. From the rocks on the left the sound proceeded.

“I rushed up a narrow pathway which led from the main road. The only living things about me were the birds, which started up before my feet. I seemed alone in the mighty solitude. I stood and listened. Again I heard that voice; high and higher up it sounded. How my strength lasted, I know not, but I felt no fatigue. Upwards I pressed till I reached a small platform, or level space, with a precipitous rock above, and a deep narrow chasm below. There on the platform stood a band of men, and one whom I well knew at their head. I broke through them. They could not keep me from him. There, bound and bleeding, his bare limbs extended on the hard rock—there lay my father. He was senseless. Their cruel blows had drained away his life-blood. I knelt beside him, and lifted his dear head and laid it on my bosom, and his gray hairs, clotted with blood, were spread over my shoulder. ‘Father, dear father!’ was all I could say. The savages seemed awed for a moment. My voice roused him. He opened his eyes.

“ ‘ Marie, I have not renounced my faith, I will not worship the Virgin. I have clung to Jesus; he is with me—my Saviour.’

“ ‘ Precious words! never to be forgotten. It was but for a moment that their fury was hushed. They heard these words, and, with savage yells, they came around us.

“ ‘ The heretic!—the hell-hound!—dash him to pieces!’

“ ‘ They tore him from me. My weak arms could not hold him. Oh, would they had killed me too!

“ ‘ They seized him. ‘ Recant!—recant!’—they shrieked. Not a word from my father.

“ ‘ Throw him down!’

“ ‘ Ah me! They held me in their strong and cruel arms. I saw them drag him nearer and nearer the edge of that awful chasm. My head reeled, but I had sense left to see them lift him up, and then hurl him down—down! Not a groan from him—not a sound—but the rushing fall through the clear air. I heard the shout of hellish triumph as they leaned over the cliff to watch the fall, and I saw and heard no more.’

She pressed her hand to her eyes, and fell back among the pillows. Suddenly she sprung to her feet, and stood by the side of the couch. She had not used such an exertion for days. Her face was flushed with a bright glow that looked like health; her voice was full and strong.

"Come and kneel before me, my children."

Tremblingly they obeyed. Their tears, which had flowed in torrents at their mother's recital, were checked with awe at her unusual manner.

"Now," said she, "swear—swear by all you hold sacred on earth, by all your hopes of heaven, that no power shall ever induce you to become members of the idolatrous and bloody Church of Rome; that Church drunk with the blood of saints; the Church that murders the souls of her own children, and the bodies of all who oppose her. Swear!—swear!" added she, earnestly.

"Swear not," said a deep and solemn voice that startled the whole party. The two girls sprang to their feet, and turned towards the place whence the voice proceeded. An aged man, of most venerable aspect, was advancing from the lower end of the hall, where he had stood for some time, the unperceived hearer of all that passed. When the lady saw him, she extended her arms towards him, and he reached her in time to prevent her falling to the ground. He received her in his arms and laid her again on her couch.

"Thank God," she murmured, as, with an expression of perfect peace and confidence, she rested her head on his arm.

"No, lady," he said; "ask for no promises. If thy young daughters be beguiled by Rome's flatteries,

oaths would not bind them. They are already pledged to be soldiers of the Cross. Trust that they will live and die on the Lord's side."

"As you will, my father," whispered the lady, whose strength, exhausted by her late excitement, was fast failing. "I am going, father! Death draws near; help me—teach me!"

"Canst thou forgive?" asked he, in a low voice.

"All—all—as I hope to be forgiven!"

He whispered a name.

"Father, I have prayed. I have forgiven him. May God convert him!"

A few questions as to her faith. It was founded on One who is faithful—on Him who alone can help in that hour to which all must come—the hour when hearts and flesh fail—that hour at which, if the soul has no hidden rock to rest on, it is lone and desolate indeed. "In the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, good Lord, deliver us!"

CHAPTER II.

THE Countess was carried to her sleeping-room. Nurses from the valley were summoned, but nothing could retard the rapid advance of death. The exertion she had made had broken a blood-vessel, which bled inwardly. Her daughters were removed from her side, but they could not retire to rest. It was a beautiful night. They opened a glass-door which overlooked the small terrace-garden which the castle walls enclosed, and stepped forth, arm in arm, to breathe the cool night air.

The castle was built on a rock, which rose abruptly from the edge of a deep river. A natural cleft in the rock divided it from the adjoining hills. Over this cleft was thrown a drawbridge, which, in former days, had been carefully drawn up every night, and the portcullis at its entrance always kept closely barred. A steep and narrow path wound from the drawbridge into the valley, and formed the only means of access to the castle. The naturally abrupt rock above the river had been made more perpendicular by art, and rose up from the valley like a lofty wall.

The castle stood at some little distance from the edge of the rock, and the intermediate space was laid out in broad walks and terraces. The pleasantest of these ran parallel with the castle, at the edge of the cliff, bounded on that side by a low wall, and shaded on the other by lime-trees, planted at irregular distances. At either end of this terrace stood a small summer-house—a little square building, open on three sides.

The full moon, lately risen, now lighted up the beautiful view which the terrace commanded, but it spread forth its beauties that night unregarded by the sisters, though the quiet scene had an imperceptible effect in soothing their troubled minds.

These fair girls were rising into womanhood at a time when men's passions were often inflamed, and their reason blinded by religious differences. The old cruelties of Rome had provoked the modern cruelties of sectarianism. Of the religion of Jesus Christ the distinguishing mark had formerly been, "See how these Christians love one another!" This mark had often been nearly obliterated by religious fanaticism; and it might frequently have been more truly said, "See how these Christians hate one another!" Yet, amidst all the darkness and turbulence of the times, the torch of truth was firmly grasped by many hands; and as one after another caught the sacred flame, the hope arose in the minds of the enthusiastic that the

days of millennial peace and glory were not far distant. But Rome was wide awake to the danger of losing the power which she had wielded, almost unchallenged, for centuries over the whole of Europe. Many great, many clever, many holy men there were still in her communion, who, blinding themselves to her faults, clung the more closely to her, when they found her so fiercely assailed from without, by many who had lately been numbered among her children. "Shame be to that man who despises his mother; double shame be to that man who despises his mother because she is old." The fallacy of the application to the Church of Rome is obvious. It was the *old* mother Church whom Christians wished to recall. Rome was the mother enveloped in the filthy rags of superstition; Christians desired to reclothe her with her pristine purity and beauty.

Nowhere had the religious battle raged more fiercely than in Switzerland. At first the Gospel had there brilliant and rapid success. With sudden bursts of enthusiasm the images in the churches had been destroyed, and whole cantons had apparently cast off Popery. But numbers in the mountain fastnesses still clung to the Romish faith. After the first excitement had passed away, a reaction ensued. Arms were taken on both sides, and much blood was shed before anything like a settlement could be arrived at as to matters of faith. Foreign potentates gladly

fomented these discords. Charles V., Emperor of Germany, and ruler of the half of Europe, had been inexpressibly mortified at the progress of the Reformation in Germany. He threw all his weight into the Romish scale. He spared neither money, menaces, promises, nor even treachery, to divide and scatter the Protestants. Dazzled by the blaze of light into which the demolition of the high walls of Papal ignorance had brought them, these Reformers were sometimes unable to distinguish clearly between important and unimportant differences among themselves. Their divisions had been healed by degrees.

But the early Swiss Reformers committed another error, which produced melancholy consequences. The pastors, not content with wielding the sword of the Spirit, buckled on the sword of worldly warfare, and themselves headed their flocks in the melancholy wars which religious fanaticism had provoked.

The death of Zwingli taught them a sad lesson!

The aged Pastor, who had arrived at the very time when his presence was most needed to help the dying and comfort the living, was one in whom the whole family had the fullest confidence. He took no share in the agitating politics of the day, but devoted himself to the care of a district in the Protestant canton of Berne, some two or three days' journey from Count Julien's castle in Soleure. He had been in the

habit of visiting, from time to time, this little Protestant family, to whom the Popish hostility of their neighbours refused a resident chaplain.

He now continued watching by the bed of the dying lady, till she was supposed to have fallen into a sleep. He then left her side to seek for her daughters, who were longing for tidings from the chamber of death.

Seeing him on the terrace, they both ran to meet him.

"Oh father, dear father," said Beatrice, "is she better? Oh do tell us she is better!"

The old man affectionately passed his hand over the fair young face, of which sorrow was so early dimming the brightness, and said, "Sweet child, sorrow is new to thee;" and then turning to Marie, and giving her his other hand, he said solemnly, "God help you, my poor children."

Beatrice hid her face on her sister's shoulder and wept.

Marie, who was two years older than Beatrice, and whose mind and judgment seemed already matured, and on whom her good and gentle mother's example had had full effect, struggled to overcome the audible expressions of the grief which was well nigh crushing her, and whispered—"Can nothing be done to save her?"

"My daughters," replied the Pastor, "your dear mother has long seen this hour approaching. For

several years this fatal malady has been making slow yet certain progress. She once tried the soft air of Italy; but the way was so tedious, and the separation from you so painful, that after her return home, she could never be persuaded to leave it again. The learned doctors who from time to time visit these valleys, and more than one has been purposely sent by your honourable father, tried all their skill, but told her the truth. They lessened her sufferings, but could not save her life. Their remedies have lengthened her life, but now, I greatly fear me, the end is approaching. Nay, dear children, do not weep so bitterly. She is ready and willing to go." But the Pastor's voice faltered, and in seeking to comfort his children, he, too, burst into tears, and they all wept for some moments in unrestrained bitterness.

"Oh! if our father were but here!" said Marie, at length.

"A trusty messenger was despatched to the Duke's court many days since," said the Pastor. "Jean Renaud was directed to hasten your father hither by a true account of his lady's state."

"Is it possible he may soon be here?"

"Alas," replied the old man, "the passes are so many, and the country so often disturbed, that I can only hope;—but God's will be done; he will be sorely ~~enabled~~."

Along the scene? The weeping daughters

were permitted to look once more upon their mother's living face. She continued for two or three hours in a calm sleep. She sank gradually, and opened her eyes no more on earth.

Before the morning dawned, Marie and Beatrice were motherless. They were overwhelmed by the unexpected blow.

The Pastor took the direction of the family, and insisted on the bereaved daughters retiring to seek the rest which they required.

While they were sunk in the deep sleep which would recruit their overwrought minds and bodies, he made instant arrangements for the interment of the departed mother.

Of course no Romanist burial-ground would receive the heretic remains, but he despatched a messenger to the nearest Protestant place of interment, a little churchyard just within the canton of Berne, and no great distance from the castle; and before the evening of the day had closed in, he started, attended by only a few domestics, on his solemn errand. By the time the sun was fully risen on the following morning, he had committed the holy dust to its last earthly resting-place. After a few hours' repose at the house of the pastor, who had opened the burial-ground at his request to a sister in the faith, he returned to the difficult task of comforting the mourning household.

And somewhat dark and gloomy were his thoughts as he journeyed back to the now desolate home. He could not see into futurity, but great were his fears for his beloved children in the faith. That no efforts would be wanting to seduce his children into error in the court to which they would surely be introduced, he felt persuaded. So young, so fair—how would they stand the fire of temptation to which they would be exposed? Hard though it may seem to stand firm in the season of persecution, it is far harder to be firm when the world smiles, and when temptation takes the form of love and kindness.

Night was again approaching as he drew near the castle, and a dark mist was gathering on the mountain sides, veiling their summits from view; the wind blew drearily down the valley, and the scene without harmonised with the gloom which was gathering over his own spirits, when suddenly, across the valley, shot a bright gleam of light—a break in the clouds just in front of the setting sun, made a way for its beams amidst the gloom. The rays shone on the misty clouds, which returned rainbow hues of brilliant colouring, and tipped the only visible peak of one of the hills with rosy light. The change was momentary, and scarcely lasted beyond a few seconds, but it brought its lesson of cheerful hope to the weary traveller:

“Be still, fond heart, and cease repining,
Behind the clouds the sun is shining.”



He looked upwards, and thought upon the words—"My strength is made perfect in weakness."

"If they are really His children—if that Sun has indeed shined on their souls," thought he, "He can and will keep them. But I must warn them; I must tell them the remainder of their mother's history, which she left untold. Poor thing! she continued firm amid many a trial, and her children will not be forsaken."

As he mounted the steps which led to the castle, he perceived that lights were hurrying to and fro; and, as he drew nearer and nearer, he found that instead of the gloom and darkness he had anticipated, there was noise and bustle within. "The Count must have returned," said he to the retainers who had accompanied him, and he pushed on with renewed alacrity. Yet, as he crossed the bridge, he felt almost desirous of retracing his steps when he thought of the sorrow he should find within. The first person he saw confirmed his suspicion.

"When did the Count arrive?" asked the Pastor of one of the servants.

"About noon to-day; and when he found my lady was dead and buried, he was like one distracted. He tore his hair, and raved like a madman; but he has been with the ladies, and is calmer now."

"Where is Marien?"

He hastened to the apartments of the aged nurse,

who first insisted on supplying his bodily wants, and then hastened to announce his arrival to her master.

The Count had at first been angry at the manner and haste of the funeral, but had begun to consider the matter in its right light. He well knew the temper of the people among whom he dwelt, and dreaded any collision on religious matters with the lower orders, who, while they would have refused his lady burial in his own burying-place as a heretic, would have been chafed and mortified had they seen their noble chieftain following her remains to a distant cemetery. Who that knows the blank of returning home and finding the dearest object, the loving centre of that home, gone, and gone for ever, will not feel for the widower in his first day of desolation? The Pastor d'Albret had known sorrow in his own person. He had been left a widower at the birth of his only child, which lived but long enough to receive the rite of holy baptism, and then slept with its young mother in one grave. Before his own deep affliction, the Pastor had been well skilled in the art of giving comfort to those in sorrow. Whoever truly feels another's woes can always speak the word of comfort, or by but a look or tone of sympathy turn the sharp edge of grief. But when to a quick and ready sympathy is added a personal experience of sorrow, then is the individual so endowed the best friend a mourner can have.

When the Pastor was ushered into the hall before described, the Count was sitting on one of the high-backed chairs, which he had drawn to the fireplace. At no great distance from him, near the table, with a book in his hand, sat a young man in clerical garb, and of remarkably prepossessing appearance. Tall and dignified in figure, calm and reserved in manner, an expression of mingled gentleness and firmness marked his open, manly countenance; and true feeling was exhibited in the bright dark eyes, which evidently understood at a glance the situation and the character of the person with whom he happened to be conversing.

Upon the entrance of the Pastor, the young man respectfully arose, and placed a seat for the aged visitor near the Count, who sat gazing into the fire, and occasionally kicking the logs with his feet. Having seen the Pastor seated, the young Priest, for such he evidently was, retired to the further end of the room.

After a silence of a few moments, the Count, being engaged in a struggle with feelings which he was ashamed to shew, rose suddenly from his seat, and, standing with his back to the fire, full in front of the Pastor, held out his hand, and said—

“I am glad you were with her. I thank you for coming to her. Did she wish to see me?”

“Her strongest wish,” replied the Pastor, “was

to have been spared to bid your lordship farewell. 'Give my loving duty to my lord,' were among her last words, 'and tell him I thank him from my heart for all his love to me. Tell him that some of my latest prayers were for him.' "

"Heaven bless her—saints in glory, receive her!" sobbed out the poor husband, fairly overcome. He wrung the hand of the Pastor, and began walking up and down the hall with rapid strides, as was his wont when under any particular excitement. At length he broke out with—"You knew her well, Monsieur d'Albret; the gentlest, the holiest, the best of beings! What did you say, sir?" said he, stopping short before the Priest. "Do you doubt the fact? I tell you she was far too good for me—far too good for this sinful earth; and therefore the angels came and carried her away to her proper home in heaven. She's there, sir. She didn't believe in purgatory, and I believe she's too good for it; but I'll have masses said, in case she may be there. Heaven's gates will open to her, sir; you don't dare to doubt it?" And the old man was working himself up into a towering passion with this melancholy mixture of love and fear—of trust and doubt—the latter of which he seemed desirous of visiting on the head of the luckless Priest, whom he fancied might reasonably, according to his Church, have a doubt of his wife's present happiness.

With perfect calmness, and with a voice of most kindly sympathy, the young Priest replied—

“ I spoke not a word, Count, nor did I even entertain a thought in disparagement of your noble lady. Not many months ago I was in these parts, and heard on all sides of her sweet gentleness—her liberal hand to all who needed, whatever might be their faith—and her watchful care over her two lovely daughters. I heard only the voice of praise, and I would fain echo it now.”

“ Your pardon, father,” said the Count hastily. “ I misjudged you. I scarcely know what I say. My mind is sorely troubled ;” and he sat down again in his chair near the fire, and relapsed into silence.

The Pastor surveyed him with the profoundest pity, but felt himself in some degree fettered by the presence of the Priest. If his own words failed, he knew whose words would make themselves heard, and find a response in every breast. He drew a well-worn book from his vest, and, in a low and solemn voice, commenced reading part of St Paul’s Second Epistle to the Corinthians. Like a strain of music the beautiful words flowed into the soul of the mourner. Distinctly fell every syllable on the ear, and, as he warmed with his subject, the low voice of the Pastor swelled into louder notes. At the end of the passage which he had chosen he paused—not a sound was heard in the room—it was as if a voice from heaven had spoken ! A

softened expression stole over the face of the mourner as he listened. Again the Pastor opened the book. He now chose part of the First Epistle to the Corinthians; and beginning at the words, "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up?" proceeded, without stop or comment, to the end of the passage. Aroused and cheered by the truths of Holy Writ, when he came to the words, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," he rose from his seat, and then repeated, as if commenting to himself on what he had read, "Victory! yes, victory! she hath won the victory. She fought the good fight: she kept the faith. Not unclothed was she found, but clothed upon; yea, clothed with the spotless robe of the Redeemer's righteousness. Her works do follow her. Hers was no dead faith; the love of Christ constrained her. She lived to him. She laboured to subdue her sinful tempers and earthly desires; strove to fulfil each duty of her station; abounded in good works. Her works do follow her while they live in our memory here. Yet not in these could she stand. The best, the holiest, need pardon; yea,—if there were such a place,—need purgatory to wash out the stains of sin which cling to each. But Jesus deals not thus with his children. Washed in his blood, clothed with his righteousness, she stands sinless before the judgment-seat. 'Absent from the body, she is present with the Lord.' We

cannot see her, for the dim mists of earth obscure our vision. Heaven opens not to our bodily eyes; but believing in that Word which never lies, we can follow her with our minds. 'Absent from the body, present with the Lord;' 'Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.' No purifying fire is needed, for her robe is the righteousness of Christ. The angels have welcomed her. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the glory of that home. Her Father's house has many mansions. Her place was prepared, and she has entered in, to go out no more again for ever and for ever.—Let us pray;" and before a word was spoken, or any objection could be made, he kneeled down by the side of the Count, who mechanically sunk on his knees, and crossed his hands upon his breast. The Pastor then poured forth a simple yet most earnest prayer, that God would comfort the mourners, and yet teach them by their heavy trial all the lessons He intended them to learn, that they might all be led into and kept in the faith in which the departed lived and died, follow Christ as she followed him, and then sleep as she did in Jesus, and rise through him at length to everlasting life.

When he rose from his knees he bowed to the Count, and without a word was leaving the hall. "Stop!" said the Count; and striding after him he grasped his hand; he strove to thank him, but his

lips trembled, and he could say no more. The look was enough. The Pastor felt he had given the comfort he desired, and he was passing from the room in entire forgetfulness of the presence of another person, when the young Priest came forward and opened the door for him, and reverently bowing as he passed, shewed by his countenance that he had not been unaffected by the scene he had witnessed.

The Count resumed his march up and down the hall for some time in silence. "Good man that," at length he said; "kind-hearted fellow: does his best. What book did he read those words from?"

"I believe it was the Bible, my lord," replied the young Priest.

"Ay, the Bible!" said the Count. "Didn't know there were such beautiful words in it. He read them very well, too. Can you read them to me again some day?"

"Assuredly, my lord; whenever you desire it," replied the Priest.

"Same Bible you use, I suppose?" asked the Count. "'Absent from the body, present with the Lord;' I shall not forget that. What becomes of purgatory then, I say?"

"The holy Church," replied the young Priest, gravely, "understands these things better than an unworthy follower of her such as I am can pretend to do."

"Better than a foolish old fellow like me can pretend to do, you mean to say. Well, well, it is best

to be on the safe side, so take you care that masses are said—make what charge you please for them. Do everything for her that ought to be done; and now, good night;" and he strode out of the hall, where the young Priest continued long in meditation before he retired to rest.

Thoroughly tired with the events of the day, the old Pastor had sought his pillow soon after leaving the Count's presence, after learning that the sisters had retired to their own apartments at an early hour, and hoped to see him in the morning. "Beg them to meet me on the terrace under the lime-trees soon after sunrise," said the old man, "for I have much to say to them; and yet this castle is now no place for me to abide in. I must return unto my own people."

"And leave my lambs!" said Marien. "To whom?"

"To the Good Shepherd, my friend," replied the Pastor. "Those whom He keeps are safe indeed!"

With a deep sigh the old nurse turned away. She had lost in her mistress the being she loved best on earth. For years the castle walls had bounded her world, and all beyond them was chaos. Her mistress had warned her to expect that, after her death, her ladies would be removed from the home of their childhood, and wherever they went she determined to go. But her visions of the future were very appalling, and in her dreams every night there were mingled in wild

confusion the mountain scenes and the crowded city—the vast cathedral she had heard of and never seen—with stern priests coming to drag her children from her care—and gay gallants striving to allure them from her guardianship.

CHAPTER III.

BEFORE sunrise, on the following morning, the Pastor was walking up and down the terrace, under the lime-trees, in front of the castle. His book was in his hand, and he appeared to be sometimes busily engaged with its contents, and sometimes gazing at the book of nature which lay open before him at so beautiful a page. The valley was still reposing in the soft light of a September morning. The heavy dew was on the grass. The voices of the birds were scarcely heard. An occasional sound from one of the few scattered chalets which were to be seen in the valley, alone gave notice that the business of life was again commencing.

Presently a door which led from the castle opened, and the two sisters, in mourning dress, came slowly forward. They could not restrain their tears at the affectionate greeting of the Pastor. He led them to one of the summer-houses on the terrace, and then gave them the simple detail of their mother's funeral.

"Her body lies in a quiet and beautiful resting-place," concluded he; "but you know it is only

the mortal part that lies there. Yet even that will one day rise all glorious ; and, if you follow in her footsteps, you will be reunited to her again."

" But," said Marie, " how shall we be able to follow her with no one to teach us ? "

" There is nothing more for you to learn in theory, my child, than what your mother has told you already—yea, taught you ever since you could understand her words," replied the Pastor. " You have much to learn in the way of experience, but your duties are simple and obvious enough. Do them earnestly and cheerfully."

" Father, what are those simple duties," inquired Marie.

" To fear God, and keep his commandments."

" Ah, Father, true," said Beatrice ; " but we cannot keep them—we are always breaking them in spirit, if not in letter."

" I am thankful to draw you into a confession of your weakness," returned the Pastor, kindly. " You cannot of yourselves love and serve God ; but who has promised to help you ? "

" God Himself by His Spirit," replied Marie, solemnly.

" Then, with the arm of Omnipotence to lean on," said the old man, " with His word to rest upon, ' My strength is made perfect in weakness,' why need you fear ? "

"We may leave off looking to Him, we may forget Him," said Marie.

"True, most true, my child; the fault is ever our own. But I can give you a few simple directions to aid you in your conflicts:—Pray often. Often study the blessed Book. Be humble and watchful. O, my children! I do not fear for you the rage of persecution. That *may* come, but it is scarcely likely. Your father's name and position shield you from the stake or the torture. But many of the Romish faith will love you, and desire earnestly, from this very love, to win you to the fold which they consider the only safe one. Young hearts are won by love much more easily than they are *driven by fear*."

"Oh, Father, do not fear," exclaimed Beatrice, earnestly. "You know how we have been taught. Could our mother's children kneel at Mary's shrine?—Could we believe that the word of a mortal like ourselves turns bread into the real flesh and blood of the Son of God?—Could we bow before the wafer?—Could we believe our holy mother to be a lost soul?" And she shuddered as she spoke.

The Pastor gazed on her kindling features. "God keep you in that mind, my child; but, oh! the heart is so weak—Rome is so strong. I knew her well,—one who looked as you now look, who spoke as you now speak. She felt strong in her hatred of Rome, and where is she now? Many years of her

life have been passed in a convent, which she entered when he who persuaded her weak heart to shelter itself in Rome had forsaken her, and cast her off. Yes, there she is still. She had one who loved her, too, and who would have died to save her from her fate. She had been brought up in the truth as you have been, yet she fell. You heard your dear mother speak of her—she was her only sister.”

“ Our aunt in a convent ! ” exclaimed the two girls. “ The daughter of the dear pastor whose death ”——

“ Yes, the same,” replied the Pastor. “ So you see there is no security in earthly relationship. She dearly loved her father, but she loved another more. For his sake she left her home, her father, her faith,—and then this wretch, for whom she sacrificed all, cast her off ; and, broken-hearted, she hid herself in a convent.”

The sisters sat astonished.

“ There is no security in *hatred of Rome*,” continued the old man, “ but there is security in *love to the Saviour*. Be sure you love him supremely—trust in him solely for help and salvation—give him the honour due as your sole Mediator and Advocate—continually use him as such, and you will be kept. If you become cold, wandering, and careless in prayer, *then beware*. If you give up reading, or only carelessly read, the Bible, and read other devotional books

instead, *then beware*. If you *have* stood firmly amid tempting voices—if you have repulsed many adversaries, and then begin to think, ‘I am safe, my armour is bright and strong,’ *then beware*. Remember the man who drew a bow at a venture, and the arrow entered between the joints of a certain king’s armour, and the wound proved mortal. Again and again I say, pray and read, be watchful and be humble.”

“Oh, Father, will you pray for us? When shall we see you again?” said both the girls.

“God can give you a better teacher than I am, dear children, though scarcely one who will love you more,” replied the old man, with a faltering voice. “Pray for you! Never a day shall pass, as long as I have life and thought, that I will not mention you in my poor prayers.”

And he bowed his head upon his hands that they might not see the starting tear. Very much beloved were these his lambs by the old Pastor, who had visited them periodically, ever since he first administered to them the holy rite of baptism, while still in their cradles.

“Ah,” said he, “you have never yet been able to join yourselves to a Church. Earnestly did your sainted mother desire for you that you might openly profess your faith, in order that you might become recipients of the holy communion. Some opportunity will offer, I trust.”

His hearers earnestly echoed this wish, and the old man continued:—

“But you must desire to know some of your mother’s history. She broke off at that dreadful scene which stamped on her character ever after a tone of sadness which was not her own in early life. When she sunk down insensible on the rock whence she beheld her father hurled, there was talk among the murderers whether they should not send her after ‘her heretic father.’ But the man who was their leader felt a touch of relenting as he gazed on the pale face he had orphaned. Cruel as he was, he could not kill her.”

“Father, had he known her before?” interrupted Beatrice.

“Why do you ask, my child?” said the Pastor.

“Could any one have known her, and yet made her suffer so keenly?” asked she.

“Ah! my daughter,” replied the old man, “it is a sad story. He had known her, and he loved her deeply, passionately, devotedly. He was the younger son of a wealthy dweller in the valley of Interlachen. In one of his mountain wanderings he had accidentally seen your mother. From that moment he never rested till he discovered who she was, and then most perseveringly he strove to win her love. I believe he was not naturally unpleasing to her, but he was a Romanist—a stern and bigoted Romanist. Led by his passion, he would have overlooked her faith; but

she dared not unite herself to him. She refused him once. Passionately he returned again and again to the charge, but could not subdue her resolution; and then his love turned to hatred, so vehement, so deadly, that he swore eternal revenge—and fully did he redeem his awful oath! Her sweet sister Emmeline had constantly seen him in his visits to the valley, and, alas! she had given her young heart to him unsought. Alfric saw his advantage. He had occasionally devoted himself to poor Emmeline, hoping to excite Marie's jealousy; but seeing she was proof against so mean a feeling, and had fully resolved never to be his, he had determined to take advantage of Emmeline's love to ruin her, as the deepest sorrow he could inflict on Marie. The better to effect his purpose, he pretended to be content with Marie's last repulse, and, giving up a pursuit which he saw was hopeless, to rest satisfied with her friendship and Emmeline's regard. Marie warned her sister in vain. I need not tell you all the arts he used; but they succeeded. One sad day Emmeline was missing. Days elapsed before her father could hear tidings of her. He then found that she had been received into the Romish Church at Interlachen, and had disappeared with Alfric no one knew where. This was the first step in Alfric's plan of revenge. You can judge how deep the wound—how the happiness of your mother and grandfather was shattered. Within a year from the time he had

enticed Emmeline from her home, he led the murderous band into the valley of Lauterbrunen, and, to gratify his guilty vengeance, scattered death and ruin through the whole place. He tortured and slew the aged Pastor, but some feeling of the past prevented him from murdering your mother. They bore her from the fatal spot, and carried her back into the more public path, and laying her down by the roadside, left her for the chance pity of the passing traveller. She was found and cared for by pitying friends, but she dared not return to Lauterbrunen. Her health was broken. Her constitution received a shock in these dreadful scenes from which it never fully rallied; and though many years have now passed, these trials were her death-blow. Her first desire, on returning to life, was to seek out Emmeline, to endeavour to bring her back to the true faith. After months of fruitless search, she heard of her as a nun. Being fully professed, the case was hopeless. In prosecuting her search she met with your father. He was a well-known officer in the Duke's service, and many years older than herself. She confided in his aid, and he assisted her, in many ways, in discovering her sister's fate. To know your mother was to love her, and he implored her to give him a right to protect her, in her now thoroughly defenceless state. He, too, was a Romanist; but he promised your mother the undisturbed practice of her religion, and pledged himself

to leave his children to her education. She departed from her principles in marrying him, but she was worn and shattered. She had no earthly arm to lean on, and she had tested his truth and uprightness in her various dealings with him; so she trusted his word and became his wife, and ever since that time has lived in this castle. Except the few weeks she once spent in Italy, she has lived here months and months with only her two little girls for her companions; but when her husband paid her his short and hurried visits she was, as you know, the light of his eyes and the joy of his heart. And to you, my children, she has bequeathed the duty of tending him in his declining years. His health is failing. Ere long he must retire from public service. Will you not, then, be his comfort, and seek, in some little degree, to supply the place of her who is gone?"

The girls had listened with such intense interest to the Pastor's recital, that they had not wished to interrupt it by any question; but, for the last few minutes, Marie had appeared absorbed in thought, and had not heard the closing questions of the narrator.

He looked to her for an answer, and was astonished to observe her troubled countenance.

"What ails thee, my child?" said he, tenderly.

"Oh! Father," and she burst into tears; "ought I to say it?"

"What would you say, my love? You may say

anything to me," replied he, with increasing kindness.

"My mother! was she—oh! was she right to marry my father?" said Marie, and she hid her face in her hands.

The Pastor felt keenly the pain he must inflict in blaming such a mother to her children; but truth required him not to gloss over a fault.

"No, my child," he cried; "but what then? Even thy holy mother was not perfect. After the storms which had riven from her every support she clung to, she became daily more timid and fearful. She dreaded lest Alfric should find her out, and she sighed for shelter and defence. She chose an arm of flesh, forgetting, for a time, that she was safe in the Everlasting arms, if she could only have trusted them. She erred, but oh how truly has she repented! Never repented her union with your most excellent and honourable father, but feared that her sin in forgetting her principles, and joining herself by marriage to one of the Romish persuasion, might be visited on your heads. 'Oh, my Father,' she has said to me often and often, 'that text, "Be sure your sin will find you out." Mine has found me. My children will be exposed to fearful snares and temptations from their father's position in that bigoted court of Savoy. Pray, oh pray that the punishment may be mine, and not fall on their innocent heads.'"

“The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin,” whispered Beatrice.

“True, most true. But think not that God will suffer sin in his own people to remain unpunished. He pardons it as to its eternal punishment, but he says Himself, ‘If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.’* Long, long may it be in coming; but I believe *each sin of the believer is punished*, though exactly in what way we shall not know, till we reach our promised home; and then, while retracing all God’s dealings with us through our weary pilgrimage, how shall we thank Him for every fatherly chastisement which has helped to purge away the dross, which would have rendered us unfit for the society of the holy ones above.”

This long and interesting conversation was here interrupted by the nurse, who came to call the listeners to their morning meal with their father, and they all re-entered the castle together.

* Ps. ix. 31, 32.

CHAPTER IV.

IN the course of that day, the aged Pastor bade adieu to his beloved children. As they kneeled to receive his blessing, most fervent was the prayer which he offered up for them. He left them in tears, and his own heart was full of sorrow. The Count parted with him kindly, and promised that whenever they came back to their home, he should be informed of their return. "And then," added the Count, "you must come and visit us again. You will always be a welcome guest."

The Pastor shook his head. "Many thanks, my lord, but my years," said he, "are many—my race must be nearly run. The young and the lovely sleep amid the clods of the valley, and the old rugged weather-beaten wreck survives; but the hour of my release cannot be very distant. Yet as long as I live, my lord, I shall love and pray for these children as if they were mine own."

"I thank you, I thank you," said their father. "Receive this token of my gratitude to you for all your care of the living and the dead;" and he endeavoured

to force into his hand a liberal present of money. But the Pastor steadily refused the gift.

"Without money and without price I like my message to be. I have enough for my wants."

"Then," said the Count, "take it to give to those that need."

"Count, I would rather have one promise from you, if you value my poor services to your family," answered the Pastor.

"What would you?" inquired the Count.

"Give your daughters," said the old man, "an opportunity of joining themselves to the Church their mother loved, and of receiving from a minister of the Reformed faith the tokens of their Saviour's love."

"Surely, surely," said the old Count. "I *promised*. I have never interfered with my ehildren's faith, and I never will. They will, of course, publicly join her Church some day. I owe this to their mother; but take this money, if not for yourself, to give as alms to the needy, and beg those you relieve to pray for me and mine."

"So given, I dare not refuse it," said the Pastor. "Farewell, and God's best blessings be with you."

The good old man returned to tell Marien the promise the father had made; and then, staff in hand, like the patriarch of old, pursued his solitary way along the valley, to his flock among the mountains of Berne.

He was not long solitary, for at the foot of the castle hill he encountered the young Priest, whose countenance and manner had prepossessed him on the preceding evening.

Staff in hand, the old man was passing on, after courteously returning the salutation of the monk Priest, when, with some hesitation of manner, the young man joined him, and walked a few steps by his side.

The Pastor's heart was so full of the scene he had just quitted, that he would have preferred a lonely walk, but when he found that the Priest only required encouragement to enter into conversation, he roused himself, and made some slight remark, in order to open the way.

It was eagerly responded to, and they were soon engaged in interesting and animating conversation. There was an air of respectful deference about the young man when he spoke to the aged Pastor, which it was pleasant to witness, and very different from the ordinary manner of priests of Rome when thrown with heretic teachers of any age. Nothing is more offensive to a mind at all moulded on Bible principles, than to see the little respect often paid in the present day to gray hairs. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man," is a command binding on the Christian as well as on the Jew, as only an extension of the

"commandment with promise." But the youth of this generation are not unfrequently guilty of forgetting this old and simple precept, and the remarks of the aged are too often listened to with the supercilious air of indifference, and the condescending pity of supposed superior wisdom.

The young Priest was a German of good family. He had received his early education in a monastery where he had been carefully instructed, and affectionately nurtured. The wishes of his friends that he should enter holy orders had received his ready assent, and he had been engaged for some time as a preacher in the cathedral of Lucerne.

He had lately been sent by his Bishop on private business into Italy, and there, like Luther before him, he had been greatly shocked at the loose opinions and looser morals of the clergy. But though he was prepared to admit that whatever the doctrine of Rome might be, her discipline was far from perfect, yet as he had witnessed many of the extravagances committed by those who had wandered from her communion, he felt the profoundest horror of every form of heresy. With all the enthusiasm of youth, he believed that it was in the power of the Church herself to wash away the few blots which marred her perfection. He hoped that the pressure from without would induce her to effect this desirable reform, and he believed that her brightest and best days were about

to commence, and that her restored brightness and purity would allure back all the erring wanderers from her fold. For these wanderers he felt more pity than hatred.

The times required the priests of those days to be well read in the Bible, and not unfrequently had he pondered over the pages of the "Blessed Book;" and on the preceding night, he had looked over again and again the two beautiful passages of Holy Writ which the Pastor had read to the Count, and had felt a little startled at their full agreement with the words afterwards uttered by the old man. He had waylaid the Pastor, more from the desire of exchanging civilities once more than with any intention of discussion on religious differences, but when two minds meet which are thoroughly in earnest in the search after and love of truth, it is impossible to converse long without some reference to those matters of faith and doctrine in which both are deeply interested, however aware they may be of entertaining different opinions.

"Yes, indeed," said the old man, after some animated conversation, "nothing could be more desirable than religious union, if such were possible. These schisms and divisions weaken and undermine our strength, and make us the laughing-stock of the infidel, the heathen, and the Jew. Missions to the whole world might be at once commenced, if Christians were only one in heart and design. Besides,

the beauty of such a spectacle as all Christendom dwelling together in love, uprightness, and peace, would of itself draw the weary, disappointed, and groping, yet anxious heathen, to desire to come and dwell in the shadow of what would indeed be an earthly paradise."

"Why could not such a scene be realised?" said the young man, earnestly. "Oh, Father, how gladly would Rome hold out her arms to receive her erring children, if they would only seek for rest again in her bosom!"

"My son," returned the old Pastor, "you have lately been in Italy, in the centre of the Romish worship. Does the Church there shine in such pure lustre as to attract the lovers of holiness?"

"The Church has many unworthy sons," replied the Priest, with somewhat embarrassed air. "I confess I was disappointed; but it is not the Church's fault."

"Far be it from me to blame the Church for all the sins committed in her name," said the Pastor; "but what is your idea of the true Church? In what does she consist? Where shall we find her?"

"The Church," replied the Priest, "is that visible body of faithful men, with the holy apostle Peter and his successors at its head, which has existed ever since the time of our Saviour; the repository of the faith; the pillar and ground of the truth, arrayed by God

Himself with the awful garb of infallibility. She cannot err."

"Who cannot err?"

"The Church."

"Well, but the Church is made up of men. Do none of the members of the Church err?"

"Oh yes; sin abounds amongst them, but the General Councils, with the Popes at their head, are infallible, and all good Catholics must bow to their decisions. The right of private judgment opens the door to all manner of abuses, especially in the reading of the sacred Scriptures. It belongs to the Church alone to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures; and I have sworn never to take or interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the fathers," replied the Priest, quoting Pope Pius's creed.

"Where do you find the unanimous consent of the fathers?" asked the Pastor. "Have you any abstract, clearly made out, of their unanimous consent in all doctrines and practical points? Their works are rather voluminous; and a man of common understanding would be apt to fancy, in reading the original works, that, on many subjects, their voices were anything but unanimous."

"The Councils determine this," replied the young man.

"Well, but suppose I am a poor unlettered cot-

tager ; how am I to find out the views of the various Councils ?" asked the Pastor.

"An unlettered rustic," returned the Priest, "has nothing to do but to trust his spiritual superior."

"Then the spiritual superior represents to him the Church," said the Pastor.

"Undoubtedly," replied the Priest, decidedly.

"A fallible man represents infallibility," rejoined the old man. "Now see the absurdities into which that doctrine necessarily leads. The poor man must then say, 'I believe what my priest tells me.' Why do you believe your priest? 'Why, because he is my priest, and a priest of the only true Church.' The man must have exercised his private judgment, before he could believe the Church of Rome is the only true Church. He took it on trust to a certain extent, but *his judgment* believed it was the safest Church to *trust to*. Then you know it is a notorious fact, that there are no two orders in the Church who think alike on the variety of points. The Franciscans and Dominicans hold different views. The Jesuits, also, differ from other religious orders on many points. We will suppose the poor man's priest to have been educated by the Dominicans ; every word in doctrinal matters which drops from this priest, he is bound to believe as the voice of his Church. This priest dies, and is succeeded by a priest educated by

the Franciscans. The man is to believe every word on doctrinal matters that drops from his lips, *ergo*, it does not matter what he believes, provided he only believes implicitly what his priest tells him."

"Come, come, that's scarcely a fair conclusion, and you have put a very extreme case. On smaller matters difference is allowable; but on the weighty matters which affect the salvation of the soul, the Franciscan and the Dominican would be agreed," said the young man.

"Then who is to judge where weighty matters cease, and lesser ones begin? Is that a matter for the man's private judgment? You can scarcely expect his religious teacher to say, 'I believe this, and my predecessor believed that; you may believe which you like, as it is a matter of little moment.' I doubt whether any of us can think points of religious difference of little moment. We are all apt to dwell more on these than on points of agreement. Of the twenty-four Articles of Pope Pius's creed, the first twelve you and I perfectly and entirely agree in; but we have left them unnoticed, and have got at once upon the twelve on which we differ."

"Well," said the young man, somewhat impatiently, "if any of your flock doubted what you said, how should you settle it with him?"

"I should say," replied the Pastor, "'To the law and to the testimony.' Here, my good fellow, take this

Bible and read it. It is the Word of God, able to save your soul. If I ever say a word to you contrary to this book, don't you believe me; but while I preach its blessed doctrines, believe me, and trust me, and honour me for my work's sake."

"In fact you make him your judge," said the Priest, indignantly. "You put a dangerous power into his ignorant, unsteady hands. See how the ignorant wield that power! What follies and extravagances are committed in the name of the Word of God!"

"Granted," replied the Pastor, "fully granted. The evils have been and are great; the less knowledge the more conceit. A superficial reader of the Bible may find detached texts in support of the wildest theories; but these evils are immeasurably less than those caused by shutting up the Word of God lest the ignorant should read it. Last week a child in my village took up a loaded gun, and lodged its contents in its sister's body; but you would not, therefore, take away the musket from the soldiers who guard our frontiers?"

"No," retorted the Priest; "I would not take the Bible from the priests, who ought, like good soldiers, to guard their flocks from spiritual enemies; but I would certainly take it from the ignorant, who, like the child you speak of, might injure themselves and others in using it."

"I contend," replied the Pastor, "that if every-

body who read the Bible abused it, and made a bad use of it, you could have no possible right to shut it up without a particular command to that effect. Such a command can nowhere be found in the Bible. On the contrary, laymen and priests, and even women and children are commended for studying its contents. The blessed book ! it refines and sanctifies, as well as teaches the minds of all who study it humbly and prayerfully. The time will come, I trust, when thousands and millions, instead of hundreds of copies will be scattered through the length and breadth of this and other lands, though I shall not live to see it. But bear with me, young man, I must say another word on the subject. Rome shuts up the Bible, because many of her doctrines cannot stand in the light of it. Many of her doctrines are diametrically opposed to its teaching. The first twelve Articles of Pope Pius IV. are founded on the Word of God ; the last twelve are founded on the decrees of Councils and Popes, and can find no support in the Bible, except from a few texts taken apart from their contexts, and strained and twisted from their obvious meaning."

"I would that that meeting of the heads of the opposing parties had been successful, and that by giving up a little on both sides union might have been attained once more," said the Priest.

"Rome, being infallible, can give up nothing. For the

sake of peace we might have given up some few things. But, my dear young friend, there is too great and too essential a difference between Rome and the Reformed faith for the two ever to agree. Rome stands on an insecure foundation—rotten at the very core. The worship of the Virgin and the saints may possibly be explained away to the educated, never to the vulgar, as long as words mean anything, and the prayers continue worded as they are. Transubstantiation some of the Reformed may wink at. We might bow nominally to infallibility, taking French leave to believe what we like about it in our own hearts, as Romanists themselves are not agreed as to where this infallibility lies. How any explanation can make indulgences a Scripture doctrine, or prove purgatory to be anything but a vast lie, framed to win money for Rome, I confess I cannot understand”—(this last sentence was uttered sotto voce.) “But on the very foundation of faith we differ—and differ broadly and widely. When the questions are asked, which every child of Adam, born to die, has such a deep interest in having answered—What must I do to be saved? How can I escape the damnation of hell? to these questions you and I must give a widely different answer.”

“Wherein would this difference consist?” inquired the Priest.

“You have sworn to answer the question,” said the Pastor, “according to the decrees of the Council

of Trent. You believe that a man's own works have somewhat to do with his justification before God— 'that the good works performed by the sinner, through the grace of God and the merits of Christ, do truly *deserve* an increase of grace, eternal life, and an increase of glory;' and if any one believe not this doctrine, you say, 'let him be accursed.' "

"The very words of Pope Pius' creed; and what could you say better than this?"

"I take the Bible in my hand," said the Pastor, "and make a very different answer. 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,' was Paul's simple reply to the jailer when he asked the question, 'What must I do to be saved?' I cannot use better words to express the difference between my faith and that of Rome than those adopted by one of the Reformed Churches, that of England, as one of the Articles of her faith:—'We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, *and not for our own works or deservings*. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.' "

"Very full of comfort, indeed, to the sinner who loves his sins. Justified by faith, I may live as I please—good works are no matter to me. I had heard, but I could not believe, you held such a doctrine," indignantly interrupted the Priest. "Besides, here

you go distinctly against the written Word of God; for no words can be plainer than those of St James—‘Ye see then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.’”

“There is no doubt that carnal men in every age of the Church have drawn the very same false conclusions from the doctrine of justification, as laid down by St Paul, that you have just drawn,” quietly replied the old man. “St James’s Epistle was written to meet these false reasoners, not to overturn his brother apostle’s doctrine; for if one part of Scripture contradicts another, we should be as much at fault in studying it for instruction, as we are in studying the folios of the fathers. Here is my Greek Testament—you read the original, of course. You will see the whole drift of St James’s argument. Carnal and ungodly men had asserted that faith could exist without works; and St James indignantly asks, can *THAT* faith save him? No, surely not. Shew me (if you can) your faith *without works*—I will shew you my faith ‘*by my works*.’ To be sure. What other way is there of shewing faith than by our works? The devils *believe*—they cannot help it when they feel the power which restrains and punishes them—but will that faith save them? No surely; neither Paul, nor James, nor any one of our Lord’s apostles, ever taught such an error. Abraham believed God, and therefore he loved Him and obeyed Him, even in the hardest command

ever given to a man. Rahab believed God, and therefore she hid the spies, and favoured the people of God. I believe, but this faith only makes me tremble, and yet neither casts out the love of sin, nor kills the power of sin in me—it is only a devilish faith, and I shall no more be saved by such a faith than the devils will. But if I believe that my Saviour died for me—that his blood will wash away every stain of sin—that his righteousness will be imputed to me, and that, clothed in it, I am considered pure and clean in the sight of a holy God—that, in fact, he has purchased a full and free salvation for me, and will give it me without money and without price—then must not my heart burn with love to him for such unmerited love on his part?—must I not hate the sins which nailed him to the tree, and which grieve him now?—and will it not be the business of my life to shew my love by my works, and to strive unceasingly after that holiness, by the attainment of which I can alone prove to myself and others that I belong to him—prove, in fact, that I have any true faith at all, and without which holiness I can never see his face?”

“I have never heard the Reformed view stated thus before,” said the Priest. “What, in your view, are good works?”

“Any action done from love to God as its sole motive is a good work,” replied the Pastor.

"But will not these be rewarded?" asked the young man.

"Undoubtedly," answered M. d'Albret; "the cup of cold water so given will not lose its reward—but not rewarded with eternal life. My dear friend, consider the amazing disproportion between time and eternity. Eternity—thousands of years pass, and yet eternity is no nearer its end. What is our life? Twenty, thirty, forty, at most seventy or eighty years. If every deed of a man's whole life of eighty years was a good deed, what proportion would eighty years of good deeds bear to eternity? No, no. Eternal life is far too incalculably great a treasure to be earned. Jesus has bought it for us—we need not add to his gift. To attempt to do so is like lighting a farthing rushlight to add to the rays of the noonday sun."

"Then what becomes of the treasury of the merits of saints?"

"Ask yourself, my friend, has any one ever yet done *enough for Christ*? Besides, my good deeds are to shew my love to God. If I could do more than enough to prove my own love, my superabundant good deeds would be of no use to another; for they would not shew his love. There is not a word in the Bible, from beginning to end, to shew that one man's goodness can help to save another. On the contrary, we read, 'When ye have done all, say we are unprofitable servants.' In doing all, we have only done that which it was our

duty to do. Christ asks for *all* our hearts, *all* our bodies, *all* our energies. It is out of all possibility that I can give Him *all* I am and have, and yet have bits of goodness, besides, to spare, to scatter about, to be picked up for the benefit of those who, because they will not give Him their own *all*, desire to offer to Him somebody else's leavings instead.

"Suffer a few words more. Believe me, all the errors of Rome arise from putting the Saviour out of the place which he fills in the Word of God.

"Jesus is the only and sufficient Mediator. No Holy Virgin Mother is required to come between us and God.

"Jesus is the only and sufficient advocate. No virgin, saints, or angels, are required to plead for us.

"Jesus' blood cleanses from *all* sin. No fire of purgatory is needed to purge away so-called venial sins.

"Jesus is the Lord our Righteousness. No saints' righteousness is needed to add to what is already perfect.

"Jesus, by one offering, perfected for ever them that are sanctified, and therefore no sacrifice of the mass is required.

"Jesus sanctifies where he justifies, and therefore no one who has faith in him would either desire or accept an indulgence, if by that he understood either pardon for past, or permission for future sins.

"To accept Christ in all his offices is to be a Christian.

"To look to others to fulfil the offices which are Christ's *alone* is to be a Romanist. In the words of a quaint old hymn—

" ' JESUS IS MY ALL—

" ' He is my Prophet, Priest, and King,
Who did for me salvation bring,
And while I've breath, I mean to sing,
Christ for me.

' Him first and last, and all day long,
My strength, my solace, and my song ;
Convince me if you think I'm wrong,
Christ for me.'

"And now, my young friend, I must thank you. You have borne with an old man's garrulity. You have let me say all I wished to say, though you might have silenced me, and now we are come to the place where we must part. I have a sick friend to see across that bleak mountain, and the day has become dark and lowering. You cannot accompany me further. May I hope we shall meet again?"

"Indeed I wish it might be, but I have little hope of it," said the young Priest. "I am on my return to my duties at Lucerne, where I have a canonry. I only diverged from my homeward route at the request of the Count, whom I met in an inn by the roadside; and when we entered into conversation, I found that he knew my parents in bygone years. I fancied, when he told me his sad errand, that I might help to comfort

him, if his lady were removed by death, and therefore I accompanied him hither; but I shall go with you to the foot of yon hill. If a storm should arise, I fear not a few drops of rain. I have learned to endure some hardness, and my body rarely suffers from fatigue or fasting."

"It is well to keep under the body," remarked the Pastor. "Self-indulgence in food, in sleep, in relaxation ill becomes soldiers of the Cross; but bodily mortifications, bodily penances, and lacerations are utterly inefficacious in subduing the wandering affections or desires of the mind. Body cannot greatly affect spirit—spirit must deal with spirit. It is the work of the Holy Spirit of God alone to purify the soul and to cleanse the 'dark chambers of imagery.' Pardon me again, my friend, but I have been young. You are occasionally thrown with those fair daughters of the Count. Should any earthly feeling of love"—

"Father," said the young man, blushing deeply, and crossing himself, "I am a priest."

"I know it, my son, I know it," replied the Pastor; "but nature is stronger than the useless and iron bands with which Rome binds her priests. Hear what I have to say. Should such a feeling arise, strive not to conquer it by bruising the flesh. Your oaths bind you. Marriage is not, alas! for the Romish priest. You cannot beat your spirit into subjection by the whip or the scourge, but God will give you His

Spirit to help you to keep your oath, not only in the letter but in the spirit, if you choose single life for His sake."

"Is it not the holier state?" said the Priest.

"I read it not so," answered the Pastor. "'Marriage is honourable in all,' Paul says, and he gives Timothy and Titus (afterwards bishops of the Church) many instructions as to what their wives and children ought to be. No; man in this, again, would be wiser than God. God implants certain desires in our nature, certain love in our hearts. The indulgence of these, *according to the rules He has plainly marked out in His Word*, adds, I believe, not only to a man's *happiness*, but to his *holiness* also."

"We are not to seek happiness here," remarked the Priest.

"We are nowhere commanded to seek unhappiness," replied the Pastor. "Home affections immeasurably increase a minister's usefulness, but they should be kept strictly under God's laws. A minister's wife should be such a one as the Bible recommends him to have, or she may be a hindrance to her husband, instead of a help. How far better am I able to sympathise with the widower from having known similar sorrow. The thoughts of my wife's deathbed teach me to soothe those who are mourning the departure of their best beloved. The remembrance of my little babe—a saint in glory—draws out my

affections towards all the little ones of my flock, and my heart can speak to the hearts of bereaved parents. My married life was short, but it was one of my greatest blessings, and has been at the root of any success I may have had among my people."

"Nevertheless I believe it to be true that a married priest must be taken up more than is desirable with the cares which a family entail," answered the young man.

"The advantages far outweigh the disadvantages," said the Pastor. "Sinners as we are, God's best gifts may be abused. But marriage is God's ordinance—celibacy is man's invention. Herein the difference lies."

"Father," said the Priest, warmly, "I would you belonged to us. Your words strangely affect me. I had formed in the cloister very different views of the heretic faith from those which you have given me."

"To you," replied the old man, "I say as to my own people, 'To the law and to the testimony.' Read your Bible, Hebrew Bible, Vulgate, German Translation, Greek Testament, I care not which; only read it, and read it with prayer. If I have told you anything that accords not with that blessed book, I have told you a lie. Traditions which are contrary to the Word of God must not be our rule of faith. If my words agree with the Bible words, they are truth.

And when you read, pray for me also, that I may love the truth more, and follow it more fully."

"Pray for me, Father," said the Priest, earnestly.

"I will, I will," replied the old man warmly, and, taking his offered hand, he added solemnly, "The Lord bless you, and keep you; the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you, and give you peace, now and for evermore."

As the old Pastor pursued his way across the mountain, his thoughts were much occupied with the conversation he had just had. His heart felt indescribably drawn towards the youthful Priest. That he was deeply interested in religion he felt persuaded. Earnest were his prayers, as he walked along, for God's blessing on His own Word, which he believed his youthful combatant would study with earnest attention. "Can I doubt the result?" said he at length, aloud. "'The entrance of Thy Word giveth light, and giveth understanding to the simple.' Thou, O God, wilt guide and teach him."

Meanwhile the object of his prayers was returning slowly to the castle. What were his thoughts as he moved along?

A deep crimson flush again suffused his face. "How could that old man have divined," said he, "what I had scarcely discovered myself? That grave and thoughtful face—the very atmosphere around her seems one of purity! How that lovely child seems to

cling to her! But I dare not indulge such thoughts. Holy Virgin, help me! I could almost fancy that thou wert such a one on earth as she now is. I will love thee, and cling to thee, Holy Mother! Thou hast heard and answered many prayers! Thou wilt help me now!" And despite the warm invitation of the Count, the young man persisted in leaving the castle on the following day. He thought it wise to fly from the danger.

He exchanged courteous yet formal salutations with the two maidens, as they stood by their father's side. Marie held out her hand, and a word of thanks trembled on her lips for the sympathy he had evinced in their time of trial. The Priest touched it respectfully; and then, bending his head in lowly obeisance, folded his arms over his breast, and went on his way.

"A goodly man that," said Madame Marien, as she watched his departure. "What a pity he is a Popish priest!"

"True," replied Beatrice, to whom the remark was addressed. "What different counsel he would give from that which falls from our dear Pastor's lips! Don't you think so, Marie?"

The question was repeated before Marie answered. She seemed lost in thought. At length, understanding that it was addressed to her, she replied simply, "I have not thought about it, dear Beatrice. Come and walk on the terrace."

CHAPTER V.

THE days passed quickly by, and the Count was compelled to return to the duties of his profession. He had sent messengers to inform his master of the loss that he had sustained, and requested permission to remain in his own home for some months at least. But it was not a time when the Duke of Savoy could spare so able an officer. He had an important employment to offer him. The Duchess sent a kind message to desire him to bring his daughters to Turin, in order that she might watch over their safety when he was absent from them. This had been only what the Count had anticipated, and he felt that he must thankfully avail himself of the offered protection, as a residence in his own castle at their age, without either father's or mother's care, was not to be thought of for a moment. Ever since his return home he had desired his daughters to prepare for the possible journey, though he had hoped that a slight respite from his arduous labours might have been granted him.

On receiving the summons from the Duke, however, the stout old soldier prepared to obey without a mur-

mur, and the whole party were soon *en route* for Turin.

The girls travelled in a litter borne between two mules. They had never left their native valley; and though many were the tears they shed on quitting their castle, of which every spot reminded them of their beloved mother, they were not insensible to the exhilaration of the journey. When they had passed the narrow defile which had for their whole lives been the boundary of their view in one direction, beautiful though was every feature of the landscape within, they felt like birds quitting a cage. After threading the defile, the road made a sharp turn, and passed across the centre of an extensive plain. The harvest had been gathered, but every field bore the mark of cultivation and care, and many comfortable dwellings were scattered here and there in the valley. Straight before them, at some distance, rose the massive walls which surrounded the town of Soleure, and which seemed to offer to the whole neighbourhood a place of security in times of danger. But these objects scarcely attracted them, when, in the horizon, they caught a glimpse of a long range of distant hills. At first they seemed like clouds, but Marie exclaimed, "O Beatrice, these are the mountains, the snow-topped mountains!"

"Where, where?" said Beatrice; and then, as she followed the direction of her sister's eyes, "O Marie,

the beautiful Bernese Alps, under whose shadow our dearest mother was born. How lovely !”

Each moment as they gazed seemed to bring the hills nearer to them, for the clouds were dispersing, and the morning light shone brightly on the snow-white summits—those hoary heads, with their everlasting snows. How many changes had occurred in the quiet valleys beneath while they continued unchanged! Fit nurses of freedom; for no foot of man had ever defiled their purity—no arm of man had ever planted a conqueror’s flag upon their venerable heads. Long may their sons enjoy the freedom they have often so bravely fought for; and may that freedom never again be sullied by acts of cruelty, passion, or revenge!

We will not follow the travellers through their long and tedious journey, but accompany them at once to its end.

It was nearly evening when, after many days’ travelling, they entered the city of Turin. The beauty of the situation, the size of its palaces, the wealth apparent in its shops and storehouses, astonished the country travellers.

The Count had sent forward a messenger, and engaged for his daughters a suite of rooms in a large house, situated at some little distance from the palace of the Duke. The Count’s own regiment was just now on duty in the city. The litters were carried under a gateway into an open court, in the centre of

which a fountain was throwing up its clear waters ; while large pots, containing orange-trees, placed round the fountain, filled the air with their sweet odour.

The apartments assigned to the sisters did not open upon the court, but overlooked a terrace, beneath which was spread a garden, filled with lofty shrubs and odoriferous plants.

The golden hues of a rich sunset were spread over the landscape, as the sisters took their first walk on the pleasant terrace.

Their father had quitted them to signify his return to his regiment. Marien was busy in arranging their rooms for the night. With their arms around each other, the sisters walked gently up and down, inhaling the sweet odours drawn by the dews of evening from the orange-trees and myrtles which abounded everywhere, and which were quite new to the Swiss sisters. They watched the ever-varying lights and shadows cast around by the setting sun. An indistinct hum and sound of voices alone reminded them that they were in the city, so entirely were the surrounding houses hidden by the shrubs and walls of the garden. The cool and calm were refreshing after their weary journey.

“Lovely, Marie, is it not? How delicious are these odours! Are we really in the city?” said Beatrice.

Marie felt sad, in spite of the surrounding beauty.

"What is it, dearest?" said her sister, fondly.
"What ails you, my Marie?"

"I hardly know, dear Beatrice. A heavy sort of sense of coming woe, and an impression of sorrow in this place seems to oppress me," answered Marie, sighing deeply.

"Darling sister, you are weary with your journey. It is not like you to be gloomy," said Beatrice, pressing her arm fondly.

"It is not right to indulge such feelings, I know, sweet Beatrice; but I cannot but miss our dear mother's care, now we have left our home, and are entering a new and untried life."

"Dear mother! Would, indeed, she were with us!" said Beatrice, with a sigh; and then, after a few moments of silence, lifting up her sweet face to kiss her sister, she continued—"Is it wrong, dear Marie? but I like the thought of seeing this beautiful city, and the soldiers my father commands, and the gracious Duchess whom he loves so well, and all the beautiful shops and palaces here; is it wrong to feel so?"

"Oh, no, dear sister, it is only natural you should feel thus," replied her sister, affectionately returning her caresses; "but my heart is in the mountains of Soleure, and I seem to long for the lime-walk before our rugged old castle even amid the marble palaces of this beautiful city. It is so still and peaceful there, and the air blows so freely across the valley. The air

seems languid here, though it is laden with sweetness."

"But you had rather be here with our father?" said Beatrice.

"Oh, surely, surely," said Marie; "anywhere to be with him; but I shall be glad, indeed, when his time of service is over, and we can go home again."

"And I shall be glad, too, to go home again," replied Beatrice, gaily; "but I shall like to see some of the bright things here first; and you, dear Marie, will feel the same, I know, when you have got over the fatigue of your journey."

Their father returned in high spirits. His companions at arms had received him with warm greetings. The Duke and Duchess had inquired repeatedly for him during the last few days, and he must be early at the palace the ensuing morning.

"Go to bed, my children," said he, "and get back your roses, for my gracious mistress will see you immediately, I doubt not."

Beatrice was soon asleep. Marie lingered before she retired to rest. She opened her Bible and read chapter after chapter. She closed her book and fell on her knees, but it was long before she could get rid of the depression which so unaccountably possessed her.

"Coming events cast their shadows before."

Marie had hidden strength to rest on—a never-fail-

ing well to drink. She drank of "the brook in the way," and again "lifted up her head."

She looked out into the clear blue sky, studded with its countless stars, and *felt* the unseen Eye gazing at her, and watching over her, as if she alone, of the creation, required His care.

She left the window and stood by the side of her beautiful sister, and felt for her as parents feel for their children.

"Mother, mother! how can I fill your place to my darling Beatrice," murmured she.

"My God shall supply *all your need*," was whispered in her soul.

She fell on her knees again by her sister's bed; and then, quietly laying her head on her pillow, felt secure in the protection she had invoked, and slept in peace. "So He giveth His beloved sleep."

CHAPTER VI.

THE house in which Marie and Beatrice lodged belonged to an Italian nobleman, the Comte de la Trinité, who, however, never occupied it himself. A suite of apartments in it were set apart for the use of his wife's mother, a lady advanced in years, of quiet habits, and dignified manners and appearance. She was attended by a little elderly lady of singularly prepossessing appearance. Her white hair drawn back from her face displayed a countenance of winning sweetness. Marie and Beatrice happened to meet these ladies in the court the day after their arrival at Turin. With native good-breeding they stood aside to allow them to pass, and seeing they were aged, made a reverence as they were passing. The salutation was courteously returned by the old Countess, as she cast a look of inquiry on the fair young creatures, who blushed beneath her gaze. The kindly smile of the attendant communicated itself to the girls. It was but a look, but how much often a look conveys. If a "high look" is said (Prov. xxi. 4) to be "sin," it cannot be of little importance to watch our

looks, as well as our words or actions. It was the commencement of an acquaintance which ripened into an intimacy equally pleasant, both to the old ladies and to their youthful neighbours.

The time drew near when the sisters would require the society of ladies of their own rank. Their father was about to leave them. All Christendom had been aroused by the success of the attack of the Turks on the isle of Cyprus, and the fearful cruelties they committed there. The Southern powers of Europe, with the Pope at their head, entered into a coalition, and sent forth an armament, under the command of Don John of Austria, brother of Philip of Spain, to chastise these bold invaders of Christian liberty. The Duke of Savoy contributed three galleys to the expedition. Of one of these he requested Count Julien to take the command. The honour was too great for the brave old soldier to refuse, though he had never tried his skill in naval warfare.

The Duchess told him that she should consider his daughters under her special protection during his absence, and fully acceded to his wish that they should remain in strict retirement till his return.

"They have only lately lost their mother, your Grace," pleaded the old man, "and many months of retirement are due to her memory. Besides, my lambs are very young, and quite unused to the ways of this hurrying world; and until it please the Virgin

and the Saints to send me back safely to them, I request that they may be left to the care of the faithful nurse who accompanied them from Switzerland."

"Your wishes shall be carefully attended to, my lord," replied the Duchess; "and I will see them only in my private apartments during your absence; but the time will come, I trust, when you will allow me to attach them to my own person."

"I could desire for them no greater honour than to serve so gracious a mistress."

"They occupy one of the Comte de la Trinité's mansions, I believe," said the Duchess. "His wife's mother lives in the same house. She is too aged to attend court, but I hear from many of her good deeds; she would be a motherly friend for your daughters."

The Count was not sorry, on his return to his quarters, to find a letter from the Countess de Brescia, begging that he would call upon her; and he received with thankfulness her offers of kindness to his children, who, on their part, were delighted at the prospect of a nearer acquaintance with the ladies whose external appearance had captivated them.

Within a fortnight of their arrival at Turin, their father had bade them farewell, with a calm exterior, but with an aching heart; all the deep affection he had felt for his wife had now centered in his motherless children.

O mother! your best wishes are fulfilled for your children—at least for the first few months of their residence in Turin. The old Countess was strongly attached to the Reformed faith, though secretly, in the bigoted city in which she dwelt, where even her son-in-law's power, and known devotion to Rome, would have failed to protect her, had her heresy been an acknowledged thing. While it was only suspected, she was left in peace. Her attendant was the daughter of a Vaudois family, whom circumstances had strongly attached to her service. In one of the fearful persecutions to which that faithful people have been subject from time to time, for professing a faith contrary to the dogmas of Rome, a Duke of Savoy had sent fire and sword into the villages of his simple and unoffending subjects. The men and women were massacred; of the children, some were murdered, and some carried off to slavery. Madame Arnaud, as she was always called, though unmarried, had been carried off in her twelfth year from her burning village, after seeing her father, mother, and two brothers murdered before her eyes. The Countess de Brescia, then a girl in her father's house, had received the poor child with pity, when brought to her by her father as the one living trophy of his bloody visit to the Vaudois valleys.

Compelled to listen to Romish teaching, Felicie continued firm, even in her tender years, in her at-

tachment to the faith of her fathers; and neither menaces, threats, nor caresses availed to shake her adhesion to it.

"She is the most obstinate heretic I ever met," was the exclamation of the angry priest of the establishment. "She has lived upon the Bible, I suspect, for she has it at her fingers' ends. She has a text for everything she advances. I must say she is a good little creature, too; for, in spite of all that her people have suffered, she never says a word of railing against those who have made her an orphan. I wash my hands of her. I shall leave her alone in future; but if I were you, my lord, I should not suffer her to remain near your daughter, but send her off to some convent, where she might be cured of her heresies, or silenced at least."

But the only daughter of the house loved Felicie, and chose to retain her near her, and so Felicie remained with her benefactress year after year, clung to her side through her married life, which was short and unhappy, and now brightened by her love and cheerfulness her beloved mistress's declining years. The single seed of kindness early sown by the *spoiled child* had sprung up into a great tree, in the shadow of which the aged woman was happily dwelling.

Every action in life, whether good or bad, is never *lost*, never *alone*, but bears corresponding and ever-increasing fruits on—on—into eternity.

Many hours of every day were spent by Marie and Beatrice with those two aged ladies, and it would have been hard to say on which side the intercourse gave the greatest pleasure.

The young girls delighted in the stories of olden times, which the elder ladies were equally fond of narrating; and evening after evening the time flew by, with its hours unheeded, while Beatrice and Marie scarcely pursued the embroidery which they continually brought with them into the Countess's apartments, so eagerly did they listen to her tales of the court of Charles the Fifth, and the details of the lives and actions of the great Reformers, whose words had filled the world with their fame.

"It was the first year of my married life," said the Countess, one evening, when Beatrice had begged her to tell of Charles the Fifth's coronation, "and my husband was in the Emperor's service; he was therefore present at Bologna when his great master was crowned by the Pope in 1530. Such a ceremonial was never witnessed; and the young prince himself, — so handsome, so grave, so courteous — the greatest man of his age."

"And yet," said Madame Arnaud, "even here, Rome shewed her determination to be greater than the greatest. The Emperor was first to be made a Canon of St Peter's, and he waited on the Pope while his Holiness performed high mass, and then

received the consecrated wafer, kneeling between two cardinals."

"But what a moment was his return to his throne," said the Countess, "when they arrayed him in that splendid mantle, glittering with diamonds brought from Constantinople. Then the Pope took the beautiful crown from the hands of the Duke of Savoy, and placed it on the Emperor's head."

"In reward for which condescension on the part of the Pontiff, the Emperor kissed his Holiness's red slipper," said Madame Arnaud.

"The cross embroidered on it, Felicie," returned the Countess, with a smile.

"But," continued Madame Arnaud, "the pageant at Bologna was nothing compared to the Emperor's reception at Augsburg."

"What did he go to Augsburg for?" inquired Marie.

"It was there, in 1530, that the Great Council was held, for the purpose of trying to bring back to the Church of Rome those who had left her communion," replied the Countess.

"Was Luther there?" inquired Beatrice.

"No, not there," said the Countess; "but I saw Luther at Marburg, where he and Zwingle met to try and settle the differences that prevailed between them."

"Differences between the Reformers!" said Marie.

"Ah yes, my child," replied the Countess, with a sigh; "as long as men's minds continue as various as their faces, it is useless to attempt to make them agree on all points: the thing is impossible."

"Yet," continued Madame Arnaud, "few persons can rest contented under this impossibility; and failing to make minds agree, those who have power in every sect are ever seeking to secure *outward uniformity*, as if anything were to be gained by the agreement of bodies when the mind cannot be brought to measure all things by the same standard, and to see all things in the same light."

"Why not agree to differ?" said Marie, smiling.

"That is what wise men do, my child," replied the Countess, smiling in her turn. "So did Luther and Zwingle at last; they agreed to differ."

"But," observed Madame Arnaud, "it was not easy, even for them, to do it; and there were great fears among the friends of the Reformed Faith that these two great men would have parted in anger."

"Luther, though a noble and a wonderful man, had a most determined will, and had been so accustomed to see all fall before him, that he found it a hard matter to yield on any point," remarked the Countess.

"Would you be so good as to tell us, madam," said Beatrice, "what was the point of difference between Luther and Zwingle?"

"One which is beyond our weak heads to under-

stand, my child,—the real presence of the body of our Lord in the Eucharist.”

“The real presence!” said Marie, starting. “Why only Rome, surely, holds that the body of our Lord is really present in the consecrated wafer.”

“Ah, Marie, you have been brought up a Zwinglian, I see,” said the Countess.

“The point of difference between the two great Reformers was as to the manner in which our Lord is present in the sacrament of his body and blood,” said Madame Arnaud. “Luther believed him present, in some manner, corporeally: Zwingle believed him present only spiritually. Yet on this single doctrine Luther, at one period of the discussion, said to Zwingle and his companions, Ecolampadius and Bucer, ‘We acknowledge you as friends; we do not consider you as brothers and members of Christ’s Church.’”

“Those were hard words, indeed,” said the Countess; “but God, in His mercy, would not allow the Church of Christ to be split into endless divisions on a point, after all, not essential to salvation. As you advise, Marie, these good men agreed to differ, and gave each other the right hand of fellowship; and Luther drew up certain Articles, which were signed and agreed to by all who were present at the Conference. These Articles spoke of the various points on which they were agreed, and concluded with these words:

—‘ And though at present we are not agreed on the question, whether the real body and blood of Christ are corporeally present in the bread and wine ; yet both the interested parties shall cherish, more and more, a truly Christian charity for one another, as far as conscience permits ; and we will all earnestly implore the Lord to condescend, by His Spirit, to confirm us in the sound doctrine.’ ”

CHAPTER VII.

ON another evening Beatrice begged the Countess to tell them something more about the meeting at Augsburg.

"That," said the Countess, "was indeed a grand sight; all Germany was assembled there to see the young and gallant Emperor. At this time he was but thirty, yet all his projects had succeeded. The magnificent Francis of France was humbled before him, and his extensive territories and personal qualities made him the first monarch of the age. He was now bending all the energies of his great mind to win or to force back into the one true Church the audacious prelates and princes who had dared to rise against her dominion."

"My husband," continued the Countess, "was one who held a canopy over the Emperor's head as he entered the town; the guns were firing, the bells ringing, the people shouting, and such a train of princes, and lords, and ladies went forth to meet him as were never seen together before, and will never be seen together again."

"Who were the Protestant Princes?" asked Marie.

"The Elector of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse, the Margrave of Brandenburg, the young Princes of Luneburg, Mecklenburg, and Anhalt," replied Felicie. "They went out to meet the Emperor before he entered the town, and he descended from his horse to greet them."

"Campeggio, the Pope's legate," continued the Countess, "was there, on a mule, glittering with purple, and he blessed the assembled multitude, who all, with the exception of these Protestant Princes, knelt to receive his blessing. It was strange to see these few men standing amidst the prostrate multitude."

"It reminded me," said Felicie, "of the Jews in the plains of Dura."

"Oh, Felicie, do you remember those horsemen in the Duke of Bavaria's service, four hundred and fifty of them, five abreast, with their bright cuirasses and red doublets, their waving plumes and magnificent horses?"

"I remember them," said Felicie, "and the Turkish and Polish horsemen who followed, with their pages, in yellow or red velvet; and the Spanish and Bohemian nobles in silk and velvet robes."

"The Emperor himself," said the Countess, "was mounted on a perfectly white horse, and his garments and Spanish hat glittered with precious stones. A rich canopy of red, white, and green damask was borne

over his head. The Elector of Mentz, with two hundred guards, was on his right, and the Elector of Cologne, with his attendants, on his left."

"I had a good place in the Minster, which was the first place he went to when he entered the city," continued the Countess. "I remember you would not go there with me, Felicie. After witnessing the meeting between the Emperor and the Princes, I hastened, by a back way, to the cathedral, and I was nearly exhausted with waiting, for the Emperor did not arrive there till between eight and nine in the evening. It was getting dark, but the place, which was gaily decorated with flowers, was illuminated with hundreds of torches. The organ pealed, the choristers sang, as the Emperor advanced up the aisle, and finally prostrated himself before the altar. They brought him a cushion to kneel on, but he pushed it away, and knelt on the bare stones; and when he knelt, all the assembly, except the Protestant Princes, kneeled too, and for a few moments perfect stillness prevailed through the whole building.

"I cannot tell why such sights affect one in the way they do," pursued she, "but as he knelt there, with all that assembly around him, I could not restrain my tears, and nearly all the ladies near me were similarly affected."

"You have forgotten the legate," said Felicie, smiling.

"The poor legate did not choose to be forgotten," said the Countess; "for when the Archbishop of Salzburg was about to pronounce the blessing, Campeggio rushed up, and rudely pushing him on one side, said sharply to him, 'This office belongs to me, and not to you.'

"The Emperor bent again; and I saw the Landgrave of Hesse hiding himself behind a candelabrum, and with difficulty concealing a smile."

"Are such processions ever seen now?" said Beatrice.

"One so grand as that of Augsburg can scarcely be seen again," said the Countess; "but at the marriage or death of a king or queen, or when one king visits another, similar scenes are enacted. When the Duchess of Savoy visits her relations at the court of France there are always all sorts of *fêtes* and processions going on. The French are particularly fond of such spectacles."

"The French understand the arrangement of effective processions better than any other nation," said Madame Arnaud. "The Germans and Spaniards spare no cost in their pageants; but the French, undoubtedly, are superior in taste and elegance to all other nations."

"In tracing the progress of the Reformation in the countries you have named, a remarkable difference presents itself," observed the Countess.

“It took, at once, strong hold on the middle classes of Germany. The independence of the various sovereigns there facilitated its growth. Several of the smaller sovereigns were its warm friends ; and in their territories the Reformers promulgated their opinions without fear or reserve. These princes were too powerful to be despised, even by the despotic Charles, and bravely and firmly they stood to their principles in spite of all the Emperor’s endeavours to win them back to conformity with Rome. The Germans are a religious people ; and so, indeed, are the Swiss. They had not learned to despise all religion, as the Italians, and very generally the French, had done, in consequence of the scandalous lives and excesses of the priesthood. The deep religious sentiments of the Germans found a deeper echo in the pure and simple doctrines of the Bible, than in the pomp and outward ceremonies of Rome ; whereas both the French and Italians delight in grand shows, and are excited to ecstasy at the sound of the organ at the sacred festivals. Spain is too thoroughly priest-ridden, and too tamely submissive to its despotic sovereigns, to have, in religious matters, a will or opinion of its own. France promised at first to be a good nursery of the truth, but it suited the policy of the court to second the determination of the Doctors of the Sorbonne to uphold Rome at the expense of the lives and properties of its opponents. Charles, the mighty Emperor,

who ruled over half Europe, was unable to crush the free spirit of the independent Germans, while Francis, though himself indisposed to be a persecutor, and much under the influence of his lovely sister, Marguerite of Navarre, a truly Christian lady, was driven by circumstances to require the aid of his Popish allies and subjects, and therefore permitted them, with the sanction of his name, to banish, impoverish, or burn his heretic subjects. Under succeeding kings no toleration has yet been secured to members of the Reformed Church in France, though they sometimes have a rest from persecution. In times of civil commotion toleration is promised, but the moment peace is restored, and the court feels strong enough to follow its own bent, persecution begins again."

"Did the Conference at Augsburg bring no good to the Reformers?" asked Marie.

"It did this good," said the Countess, "it banished all idea of the possibility of amalgamating Rome with the Word of God. It proved that Rome cannot, and will not, yield one iota of her unscriptural doctrines for the sake of peace. Neither would Rome, by her own authority, do away with one single abuse, though her best sons painfully felt that a purifying process might have conciliated her adversaries, and was greatly needed for her own advantage."

"The communion in both kinds to laymen," remarked Felicie, "and the marriage of priests, were

boons granted for a time to certain half Romanist states ; but even these trifling concessions were soon recalled."

"The Emperor's endeavours at conciliation were utterly fruitless," said the Countess. "The Conference at Augsburg ended in disappointment and irritation. War, with all its disastrous consequences, soon followed. In fact, religion and politics have become so intermingled in our days, that it is impossible to separate them."

"Switzerland has had her share in the struggle," said Madame Arnaud.

"Switzerland has, indeed, borne a gallant part in the fight," said the Countess. "She has won her way to spiritual freedom through war and blood."

"Unfortunately," said Madame Arnaud, "the Swiss pastors committed the sad error of seeking to wield the civil as well as the spiritual sword. They buckled on defensive armour for the stern struggles of the battlefield, forgetting that their fight should have been a spiritual one, and prayer their only allowable weapon."

"Zwingle's death taught them a sad, yet salutary lesson," said the Countess.

"Did you know Zwingle, madam?" asked Marie, eagerly.

"I did, Marie," replied the Countess. "My husband was still with the Emperor, and Felicie and I

retired to Zurich for a while. The wife of the burgo-master was a relative of mine, but we were drawn there chiefly by the fame of Zwingle's preaching and administration. He was, in fact, the ruler of the whole canton. When we went to Zurich there was no thought of civil war."

"You remember," said Felicie, "how tidings were brought to the town that the Five Cantons were marching on Zurich. No one believed the news. When it was found that it was really so—oh, the dismay and terror that prevailed! I tremble when I think of it now."

"Our house was opposite Zwingle's," said the Countess. "I saw them bring his beautiful war-horse to the door. Zwingle came forth with a grave face, but determined air. His noble wife, Anna, was beside him, struggling with her fears, and their young children hung weeping around. He gave his children his blessing, and one kiss to his wife, and then turned away, with such a look at her as I shall never forget, as if parting with her were worse than death to him. He tried to mount his horse, but the animal backed and refused to let him get into the saddle. He overcame it with difficulty, and rode quietly down the street. He cast not a look behind. Up that street he never rode again."

"How? Why, madam?" exclaimed both her hearers.

"He died upon the battle-field," said the Countess.

"Oh, it was a fearful fight," said Madame Arnaud; "brothers fighting with brothers."

"What was the ground of the quarrel?" asked Marie.

"The Five Cantons," replied Madame Arnaud, "Uri, Zug, Schwitz, Lucerne, and Unterwalden, clung to Rome. Zurich was thoroughly Protestant. There was a district, partly dependent on the Five Cantons and partly on Zurich, where Zwingli determined the Word of God should be freely preached, and where the rulers of the Romanist cantons were equally determined to put a stop to the preaching. Excesses were committed on both sides. Austria fomented the discord. Rome, as usual, fought with the sword and the stake; and at her example, Zwingli took the sword. He thought the time was come for the overthrow of Popery, and the universal establishment of a purer religion, by the arm of the secular power. He acted more as a magistrate than as a minister of God. The Five Cantons stubbornly resisted the preaching of the Word. The Zurichers strove to starve them into submission. In despair, the Waldstettes, as the people of the Five Cantons were called, united their forces and marched upon Zurich, and took their enemies by surprise."

"Signs and portents had not been wanting," said Madame Arnaud, "to prepare men's minds for some

great calamity, but the slaughter at the battle of Cappel had not been anticipated."

"Alas!", said the Countess, "no wars are so bloody and so cruel as those caused by religious differences."

"Zwingle was one of the many who perished in that fatal battle," said Madame Arnaud. "He was stooping to comfort a dying soldier when he was struck down by a stone. His last words were, 'What matters this misfortune? They may indeed kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul!' He then lay, with upturned face, and clasped hands, under a pear-tree, which still bears his name. 'Mass or Death,' was the watchword of the victorious party. After the battle many of them wandered about the bloody field with torches, mocking the dying agonies of the heretics!"

"Cruel! horrible!" said Beatrice.

"Ah! my child," said Madame Arnaud, "fanaticism hardens all hearts. I have seen such sights—women and children tortured—murdered—for no crime save that of reading and following the Word of God."

"Was Zwingle dead when he was found after the battle?" asked Beatrice.

"He was still alive, when two Waldstette soldiers found him," replied Madame Arnaud. "They asked, 'whether he would not like a priest to confess him?' He shook his head. 'At all events, think in thy

heart of the Mother of God, and call upon the saints,' said they. When he still made a sign in the negative, they examined him more closely, and some one mentioned his name. 'Zwingle! that vile heretic—Zwingle! that rascal—that traitor!' resounded on all sides. A Captain Fockingen, of Unterwalden, pierced his throat with his sword, uttering the words, 'Die, obstinate heretic.' They then burnt his body, and scattered his ashes to the winds. Besides Zwingle, his son, his son-in-law, his brother-in-law, and his most intimate friends, perished on that fatal field!"

"His poor wife!" said Marie; "she was left desolate indeed."

"How long ago did all this happen?" asked Beatrice, deeply interested.

"In the year 1531, just forty years ago," replied the Countess.

"Though the battle was between the Swiss only," continued Madame Arnaud, "it was considered of much importance by the Romanist party. The Romish sovereigns rejoiced, considering it the beginning of a conflict which would utterly destroy the Reformers. They were happily mistaken. Many of the Swiss cantons are thoroughly Protestant still, though many still cling to Rome."

"Charles the Fifth had no reason to love Zwingle," said the Countess. "He had planned a scheme of

political union which was to have hurled that monarch from his throne. Zwingli considered him unfit to reign, since he refused liberty of conscience to his subjects."

"Do any princes now grant liberty of conscience to their subjects?" asked Beatrice.

"Ah!" replied the Countess, "there is scarcely anywhere that real religious liberty for which Zwingli contended. Protestant princes are often nearly as intolerant as Romish princes to those who differ from them, though they do not make such free use of the torture and the stake as the Romanists do. In some of the states of Germany, and in some of the cantons of Switzerland, toleration is granted alike to Protestants and Romanists. In England, perhaps, the Romanist enjoys as much toleration as in any Protestant country."

"There does not seem to be much religious liberty here," said Beatrice.

"Hush, hush, my child, speak low. I believe we may converse in safety with the doors shut," said the Countess; "but if I were known to be a Protestant, my son-in-law's power could not protect me, nor am I sure he would wish me protected. That I never leave the garden of this palace is my excuse for not attending mass. I can depend on my priest, who is a truly Christian man, though still attached to Rome. Felicie is known to be a heretic; but there is a little peace for her people just now."

"And Felicie, happily for her, is in too humble a position to excite observation," remarked Madame Arnaud.

"Since our Duke returned to his dominions, there has been a furious persecution of the Vaudois, headed, alas! by my son-in-law," said the Countess. "The Archbishop of Turin was the mover of it; but the Vaudois resisted the soldiers sent against them so bravely and successfully, that the Duke, who is by no means a cruel man, was glad to listen to the intercession of the Duchess, and make a treaty with the Vaudois."

"Not cruel!" exclaimed Beatrice, indignantly; "not cruel! To murder men, women, and children, simply because they cannot believe all that the atrociously cruel and bloody Church of Rome believes! Who that ever read the Bible could believe her wicked lies and monstrous absurdities?" and Beatrice's colour rose, and indignation flashed from her eyes.

"Hush, my child," said Felicie, gently; "hard words do no good. These strong terms applied to Rome may be true as regards the carrying out of her doctrines, but your own spirit will be injured if you indulge in such language."

"Ah! Madame," answered Beatrice, "my spirit rises when I think of her cruelties, and I do not know how to bear the name of Rome."

"God bears with it," said Felicie, mildly.

"Besides, Beatrice," interposed the Countess, "the harsh feeling which prompts these harsh words would prevent your being useful to members of the Romish Church, while it will not strengthen you to stand against her wiles yourself."

"Me, madam!" said Beatrice, "I could never leave my mother's faith."

"I would rather hear you say humbly, 'God help me,'" said the Countess, gravely. "I am old, Beatrice. Believe me, dear child, our strongest bulwark is a sense of our own weakness."

"Pardon me, madam, I spoke rashly," said Beatrice, blushing deeply, while tears filled her eyes.

"Pardon you? my child," said the Countess, kissing her affectionately; "I would only warn you, sweet one. Your mother's God protect you!"

When the sisters had retired to their own apartments, their aged friends conversed long about them.

"I could trust Marie's firmness," said the Countess. "She speaks little, but there is that about her which assures me she would be a martyr, if necessary."

"I fully agree with you," answered Felicie; "but Beatrice is so lovely and engaging."

"She is," warmly replied the Countess, "and so affectionate—so devotedly attached to her sister. But she is too lovely, and too excitable for this court. That wily Archbishop, if he casts his eye on her

—or if the Duchess become attached to her, I should tremble for her.”

“The Duchess’s kindness has evidently impressed both the sisters already,” said Felicie. “She is so unaffectedly kind, and can be so winning. Sometimes I cannot help hoping that she may not be utterly opposed to the Reformation.”

“Ah! Felicie,” replied the Countess, “she is completely under the Archbishop’s influence. To please him, she consented to the Vaudois crusade. She would do anything the Archbishop commanded her.”

“She must have heard the truth, too,” remarked Felicie.

“She was much in early youth with her good aunt Marguerite, the late Queen of Navarre,” said the Countess, “and that admirable woman, Marguerite’s daughter, the present Queen. But the court of Paris is not a favourable place for spiritual development. Catherine de Medici is devoted to Rome, and hates the Reformers intensely.”

“Paris loves the world too well to love the Saviour of the world,” said Felicie. “Gallantry, intrigue, dissipation, and frivolity, all stand in the way of the Gospel.”

“There is a truce just now between Rome and the Reformers in France,” remarked the Countess; “but it is a hollow peace, I am persuaded. I trust not Catherine. And our Duchess is a true Romanist,

though a kind and wise woman. The Duke is too busy with politics to think of the religion of Christ. Besides, the Pope's friendship is too valuable for him to risk it for the sake of a few 'speculative notions.'"

"God send a good issue to this Turkish war!" said Felicie. "I tremble for our brave soldiers and sailors. A Turkish prison, or African slavery, is a fearful thing."

CHAPTER VIII.

So passed on the winter. The more the Duchess knew of Marie and Beatrice, the more interested she became in them. Their manners were so simple, their hearts so true, that conversation with them was a real pleasure to one accustomed to the hollowness of courts.

Marie never obtruded her religious views, though, when questioned as to her faith, she always replied with clearness and decision.

Beatrice occasionally, even in the Duchess's presence, indulged in bursts of indignation at any tale of persecution.

On these occasions the Duchess either smiled as at a childlike ebullition, or simply restrained her with a word of dignified rebuke. Marie, privately, in vain exhorted Beatrice to more moderation.

"I cannot help it, darling Marie," she would say, when alone with her sister. "I feel such contempt for all that trumpery and nonsense about saints and the Virgin which they are so fond of, and it makes me so angry to think that sensible people can pray

before these dressed-up dolls which we see in the churches."

"But anger will do no good, dearest," said Marie. "Some of those who kneel there regard not the images themselves, but look to the beings whom they represent."

"And much help can those beings give them, if they do look to them," retorted Beatrice. "Don't you think, Marie, that if Mary could hear all the words they say to her, and the blasphemous names they call her, she would shed tears, even in heaven, at having such honour paid to herself, and taken away from her Son?"

"I do indeed think she would grieve," replied Marie; "but she would be more sorry than *angry*, Beatrice."

"I cannot help it, but I am more angry than sorry," returned Beatrice. "I long to take all the idols and break them to pieces."

"And if the poor people's hearts were after their idols, breaking their images would not dislodge them from their affections, and therefore no good would be done by it. Let us pray more for them, dear sister. We may help them by our prayers."

"Do you not think our words may do some good, Marie?" asked Beatrice, reproachfully.

"They may, with God's blessing, dearest Beatrice. *Loving, truthful* words may do good; but bitter, angry

words must do harm. And," continued she, "our conduct will do more than our words. Indeed, dearest, we must keep ourselves quiet and humble if we wish to shew our Romanist neighbours that our religion is really better than theirs."

"When will our father return, I wonder?" said Beatrice.

"And take us home," added Marie, "to our own valley, and then to Protestant Berne, where we may join the Church."

Beatrice blushed. She longed for her father's return, that she might see more of the gay world of Turin. She was fascinated by the Duchess's kindness. She liked the appearance of the young ladies of the court, to whom she had been introduced, though never allowed private intercourse with them. She had traversed the gay saloons of the Duchess's palace, and heard of the fetes and assemblies held there, and she longed to bear a part in them. Perchance the looks of admiration which she had often met had had their share in drawing her towards scenes where it might be more openly displayed; but love to her sister was, however, still her predominant feeling, and in her society she was still perfectly happy, and she warmly shared Marie's feelings of love and admiration for the Countess and her friend Madame Arnaud. In spite of all which the Countess de Brescia felt she should have to undergo should she

openly profess her faith, and in spite of all that Madame Arnaud and her family had suffered from the persecuting spirit of Rome, it was remarkable that *they* never indulged in any acrimonious expressions against that Church, while Beatrice rather gloried in the strength of her abhorrence of her tenets and detestation of her cruelties. Beatrice's views were such as would have led her to be a persecutor had opportunity served. She would have been an Iconoclast of the highest order. What is the feeling in the human heart which induces it so readily to lend its aid to persecution? Romanists—Protestants—sects and denominations of all sorts have ruled with a rod of iron over their opponents, when Providence has given them the upper hand. One great difference there is, which should ever be strongly marked, between Rome and all other classes of religionists: Rome persecutes in obedience to the dogmas of her faith; all other sects persecute in direct disobedience to the Book which they profess to take for their guide. No command can be found in the Old or New Testament to propagate the religion of Christ with the sword. Neither in any of the apostles' sermons do we find violent abuse of the idols whom they desired to dethrone. On the contrary, in Paul's sermon to the Athenians, he seized the only piece of truth which their idolatry afforded, as a foundation on which to build his edifice of truth. "I found an altar

to the unknown God. Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." The philosopher Isaac Taylor has drawn a striking picture, in his "Fana-ticism," of the *means* by which an inquisitor is made. The isolated position of the Romish priesthood makes them easily susceptible of malign influence; but the lonely-hearted priest is not the only inquisitor. Women, with every tender affection called into play by husband and children, have been found to be willing instruments of persecution, just as tender and refined women are found to be among the most cruel and pitiless slave-owners in America. The fact is, that cruelty is inherent in human nature. Education may do something towards eradicating it—grace alone can root it out altogether. "I am right, my friend; you are wrong," is a universal feeling. To love our enemies is the highest attainment in the school of Christ—to love our friends, neighbours, and dependents is no easy matter. "If you cannot see what is right, I will try and help you. If my help does not produce the desired effect, it is not because you cannot, but that you *will* not, see the right; and in this case I must *make* you see it." "But," replies my friend, "imprisonment and torture, and the stake, cannot *make* me see what you call 'the right' to be so." "Ah, well then," I reply, "you deserve to be tortured and murdered because you *will* not *see as I see*."

This is the history of persecution; and the germs

of these feelings are to be found in all minds which are not imbued with the Spirit of Christ.

A few months passed away, and then the whole city of Turin was filled with rejoicing at the tidings of the glorious victory of Lepanto, gained by the allied Christian fleet over the Turks. Most hardly had it been contested. The Turks brought two hundred and thirty gallies into the engagement, and every weapon of warfare, of ancient or modern invention, was employed by the furious combatants—arrows, javelins, fire-balls, grappling irons, cannons, muskets, spears and swords. The gallies grappled together, and the deck of each afforded a battle plain, where enemies fought hand to hand in murderous warfare. Hali, the Turkish Admiral, and Don John of Austria, the Christian chief, surrounded by their choicest troops, sustained the bloody fight for three hours. Suddenly the galley which Count Julien commanded, having been rendered useless during the early part of the engagement, by being grounded on a sunken rock, was got off by the repeated efforts of the crew, who were burning with eagerness to be engaged in the action. The Count moved on at once to attack the galley of the Turkish commander, whose crew were nearly exhausted by the gallant fight they had so long maintained. This new succour gave fresh spirit to the Christian soldiers, and struck terror into the hearts of the Turks. The surrounding gallies, as by one sud-

den impulse, suspended their mutual hostilities, to see the result of the combat of their chiefs. In spite of every effort to prevent a junction, Count Julien's galley joined itself to Hali's, and in a moment Count Julien, at the head of his men, sprung into the Turkish galley. There was no retreat. The gallant crew were surrounded by the bloody swords of their enemies. The narrow space was soon doubly strewn with the dying and the dead. Still Hali fought bravely on—the dead bodies of his men formed ramparts around him and the few gallant followers who still remained alive.

"Give up your sword," shouted Count Julien—"receive quarter."

A vigorous thrust at an assailant who had pressed before the Count was Hali's first answer. The man fell dead at his feet

"I will die sword in hand," said the veteran, sternly.

"Die, then," said the Count; and turning aside the sword of the admiral with a small shield which he bore on his left arm, one well-directed blow on the head from the Count's sword stunned the unfortunate chief, who staggered and fell. A hundred swords at once pierced him, all eager to share in the death of Hali.

"Down with the Turkish colours—hoist up the banner of the Cross," shouted a hundred voices.

The few Turks remaining in Hali's galley were

speedily cut down. The banner of the Cross waved proudly in the air. The head of the brave Hali was cut off and fixed on the stern of the vessel; and the surrounding galleys either struck at once to the Christian fleet, or sought for safety in flight. But few were fortunate enough to escape. Uluzzali, the second in command in the Turkish fleet, took advantage of the few minutes when the attention of the combatants was drawn to the Admiral's galley, and detaching himself from the vessel with which he had been bravely fighting, succeeded, with twenty-eight other ships, in making his escape. Thirty Turkish gallies were sunk, twenty-five burnt, and one hundred and thirty taken. Thirty thousand Turks perished in the fight, ten thousand were taken prisoners, and fifteen thousand Christian slaves were released from the oars of the Turkish galleys. Never had so glorious a victory been won by Christian armies. Italy was in a state of transport when the news arrived. Rome, Venice, and Turin were intoxicated with delight. Pope Pius the Fifth exclaimed, when he heard the glad news—"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John;" in allusion to the name of the fortunate and valiant commander-in-chief of the expedition.

CHAPTER IX.

THE first news of the victory was imparted to Beatrice and Marie by the Duchess herself. They received a summons early one morning to the palace, and while on their way thither, were astonished at the sound of all the bells in the city ringing together.

"Sister, sister," said Marie, "news from the war. Oh! our father, our father." Trembling, and scarcely able to support herself, she entered the Duchess's palace. The sisters were conducted at once to her private apartments.

One glance at the Duchess reassured them. Her face was radiant with joy; she advanced to meet them as soon as the attendant page opened the door, and kissing each as they bent before her, "Good news, my daughters; all praise to the Holy Virgin and the Saints! a glorious victory. What is the matter, Marie?" said she, as the poor girl trembled so that she could scarcely stand.

"My father, madam!" gasped Marie.

"Your father is safe, Marie," replied the Duchess, "and has borne a most noble part in this terrible fight; he boarded the Turkish admiral's galley."

"Thank God, thank God!" said Marie, falling on her knees. "Safe! you say he is safe, and will return!"

"God grant he may speedily return," replied the Duchess, "and with added laurels on the aged brow that, from youth to age, has fought so nobly for Savoy. Sit down, Marie," and with the tenderest caresses she soothed the agitated girl. Beatrice's cheek, meanwhile, glowed with delight at the praise bestowed on her father. Suddenly the door opened, and a page entered, and bowed.

"Ready?" said the Duchess.

"Yes, your grace," replied the page.

"Come with me, my daughters;" and they followed her from the apartment in which they were, into the bedroom of the Duchess, which opened into it, and thence to a small oratory within the bedroom, where they had never before been admitted. The Duchess passed swiftly through the oratory, and entered a narrow passage beyond, which ended in a flight of steps. These she descended, Beatrice and Marie closely following her. A door at the foot of the stairs opened, and the Duchess passed through it. As soon as the sisters had crossed the threshold, the door closed behind them. At first they could see nothing. They had entered a lofty apartment, lighted with windows, whose deeply stained glass shrouded every object in obscurity till the eye became accustomed to

the light. Mechanically they followed the Duchess, who advanced rapidly to the upper end of the room, where lights were burning, and sunk on her knees. They were in the chapel belonging to the palace. It was filled with the Duchess's suite, servants, and dependents. A priest, in magnificent robes, was kneeling on the highest step in front of the high altar, with his back to the people; and two attending priests were kneeling on the lower step behind him, with their faces also turned towards the altar. Six massive golden candlesticks, standing on the altar, lighted up an exquisite picture of the Virgin Mother, with her babe in her arms, which hung just above them. In the centre of the altar stood a golden cross, with an image upon it, painfully exhibiting a figure in the agonies of death. Beneath the crucifix stood a small image of the Virgin, dressed in gorgeous apparel, and wearing a coronet of precious stones.

The whole scene struck the sisters with astonishment. They clung to each other, and stood as if transfixed. "Kneel, kneel," whispered a voice near them; and in the perfect quiet of the chapel they knelt down with the rest. Presently a bell rung, the priest rose, and the service of the mass commenced. "Sister," whispered Marie, "this is a Romish chapel; we have no business here." Retreat was impossible; the chapel was crowded with worshippers; the organ was playing, which enabled the sisters to whisper

unheard. "Sister, we will not kneel at the mass; they will presently adore the Host," said Marie.

"What can we do?" whispered Beatrice.

The Duchess continued with her eyes fixed on a book, which her page had brought her, sometimes standing, and sometimes kneeling on a crimson-velvet-covered *prie-dieu* placed near the foot of the steps which led to the altar. Two rows of pillars supported the middle of the chapel roof, whose beautiful workmanship the sisters' minds were too much filled with anxiety to have leisure to admire. One of the pillars afforded to Marie's quick eye a hope of shelter; and, gently making her way through the crowd, she drew Beatrice after her to the nearest of them, and getting behind it, stood there partly hidden. They had taken up their position only just in time; the bell rang again, and the officiating priest, who was no other than the Cardinal Archbishop of Turin, raised his arms, holding something in his hand; it was the wafer. The whole assembly bowed down in one moment as the bread was thus raised for their adoration; all except Marie and Beatrice. Marie stood so as completely to conceal Beatrice from the view of the Cardinal. The eye of the Archbishop was caught by the dignified form and pale face of Marie, who, strong in her sense of right, disdained to abate an inch of her full height, while her woman's heart inwardly trembled with fear.

The Archbishop visibly started, and as Marie's eye met his, a paleness overspread his face. "He is filled with rage," thought poor Marie; and she covered her face with her hands, still keeping her erect posture.

The Archbishop recovered himself, and continued the service. The multitude rose. No one but the Archbishop had noticed the sisters. He descended from the step, and walked with the remains of the holy wafer encased in a box of gold, down the centre aisle, followed by his attendant priests. The box was placed at another altar, at some distance from the high altar, and towards this box every worshipper devoutly bent as they entered and quitted the chapel. The Cardinal then mounted the richly wrought pulpit, which stood not far from the pillar which the sisters had chosen as their stronghold. The *prie-dieux* of the congregation were turned, and the congregation sat down with their faces turned towards the pulpit. Some kind hand pushed two chairs towards the sisters, who gladly sunk down amid the crowd, and listened to the short and pointed address in which the Archbishop commented on the glorious news which had just arrived. He exhorted his hearers to shew, by their conduct, the gratitude which their lips professed, to the Giver of victory, for the wonderful success granted to the Christian arms. It was a sermon the sisters could listen to

with profit. Marie met the eye of the Archbishop more than once fixed on her, but now she quailed not beneath his glance. Her heart was overflowing with gratitude to her heavenly Father, who had watched over her beloved earthly guide, and protected him amid all the dangers of the bloody conflict.

At the close of the sermon the Duchess rose, and seeking the sisters with her eye, motioned them to follow her. Turning to the box where the wafer was deposited, she made a deep obeisance, and passed out of the chapel, followed closely by the sisters, who breathed more freely as they quitted the incense-laden air.

With kind words the Duchess dismissed them, and they retired with scarcely a word, fearing to expostulate with her for having beguiled them into a Romish place of worship.

The events of the morning were speedily detailed to the Countess and her beloved companion ; but a sudden illness had attacked the former, and Felicie's attention was entirely engrossed by her mistress, who, however, was not confined to her bed, and had requested her young friends to come as usual to her apartment. They all rejoiced together at the good news of the victory, and the sisters would gladly have sought their aged friend's opinion as to their conduct in the chapel, but Felicie's anxious face

warned them that quiet was needful for the invalid; and they shortly retired to their own rooms, to talk over with Marien the delightful prospect of their beloved father's speedy return to Turin.

CHAPTER X.

IN the course of the day on the morning of which the sisters had appeared in the chapel, the Cardinal begged an audience of the Duchess, to offer his congratulations on the victory of Lepanto.

After some conversation on that subject, the Archbishop inquired who the ladies were whom he had seen in the chapel that morning in her Grace's suite, as their conduct there had been most extraordinary.

"Indeed?" said the Duchess; "I was so occupied that I did not observe them."

"In the most marked manner they stood erect at the elevation of the Host," said the Cardinal.

"Ha, indeed! The fact is, my Lord, these young ladies are unfortunately of the Reformed Faith," replied the Duchess, with some hesitation of manner.

"And yet attached to your Grace's person?" inquired the Cardinal, lifting his brows with astonishment.

"Not exactly, at present. They were left under my care while their brave father was commanding one of our gallies under Don John."

"Not Count Julien's daughters?" said the Cardinal, hastily.

"Yes, the same," replied the Duchess. "Was your Eminence acquainted with the circumstance of their being left under my care?"

"No wonder the likeness startled me," muttered he. "Marie's heretic children!" and he forgot to answer the Duchess's questions.

Alarmed at his manner, she remained silent, and then continued in a deprecatory tone, "You would not condemn me, father, for taking the charge of them? Their mother died last year, and their father had no relation with whom to leave them while he fought our battles. He has been a brave soldier for Savoy."

The Cardinal recovered himself, and in the blandest manner replied, "Condemn your Highness! It is only a further proof of the goodness of heart which makes you so deservedly beloved by your subjects. I simply felt surprised that so faithful a daughter of the Church should not insist on outward conformity at least in her attendants. It was most unseemly to see those ladies standing when all around were kneeling. How came they there?"

"It was my fault, my Lord," eagerly replied the Duchess. "They were with me rejoicing in their father's safety, and I thought it a good moment to introduce them to one of our solemn services, sup-

posing they would, thus taken by surprise, follow the example of those around them, at least as to external posture; their doing otherwise shews determined heresy."

"Ah, well, they are both young, and the younger one singularly beautiful. Your Grace must convert them to the faith," said the Cardinal, smiling.

"Would I were able!" earnestly replied the Duchess; "they have won my affection by their simple and truthful characters, and by the love with which they regard each other, and the memory of their mother."

"They speak much of their mother?" inquired the Cardinal.

"They are apparently moulded by her opinions and commands."

"Are they well read in the Bible?"

"Thoroughly so, Marie especially."

"Are they vehement against the true Church?" continued the Cardinal.

"Marie never expresses herself strongly against our Church, but has a text of Scripture on her tongue in support of every opinion she advances," replied the Duchess, with some hesitation of manner.

"The worst kind of heresy," said the Cardinal, shaking his head. "But the younger one is not so ready?"

"No, she leans on her sister's words; she only

seems always anxious to express her abhorrence of persecution, deceit, or what she calls idolatry."

"And you permit these topics to be discussed in your presence, and before your ladies in waiting and maids of honour?" asked the Cardinal, in a stern tone.

"I permit no *private* intercourse between any of my suite and these young ladies. Did I not check Beatrice, she would speak more vehemently than she now does. I thought it better to allow some freedom of speech, in order exactly to ascertain their opinions."

"Right, right," replied the Cardinal; "you have acted, as usual, judiciously. Check them too sternly, and they would consider all Catholics narrow and bigoted: refuse all discussion, and they would suppose it was because you had nothing to say for your faith. But it is a course to be proceeded in with the utmost caution when your other ladies are present. Your Grace is too well skilled in controversy to be shaken by the words of such children as these. But means must be sought; that young one is too fair to be a heretic."

"With your Grace's assistance," said the Duchess, "I doubt not we should succeed with her."

The Cardinal smiled grimly. "I am not wont to be baffled. It is worth the trial. A soul saved"——

"Is priceless," interrupted the Duchess.

"The Virgin and the holy saints aid us," said the Cardinal, crossing himself devoutly.

"Us?" said the Duchess, joyfully. "Then will your Eminence really seek to win Beatrice to the true faith?"

The Cardinal bowed.

"Assuredly," he replied, rising; "but I must become acquainted with the sisters first, and judge by observation the likeliest means to effect the desirable end."


"Shall I send for them at once?" said the Duchess.

"Other affairs call me away from your Grace at the present moment," replied the Cardinal. "To-morrow, at this time, I shall have the honour of attending you again."

Not aware of the formidable individual they were to encounter, Marie and Beatrice received with pleasure the Duchess's summons on the following day. They were engaged in conversation with her when the Cardinal was announced. They immediately rose; and, curtsying profoundly, were retiring from the room, when the Duchess called them back.

"You need not retire," said she. "The Cardinal would speak with you."

Marie's face for a moment grew pale; but she sent upwards a word of prayer for help. Those ejaculated prayers, what blessing and strength do they



bring! By means of them the Unseen draws nearer and nearer, yea, *close* to us. "Underneath are the everlasting arms."

Beatrice's face glowed. She feared not. It was rather a pleasure to her to measure her strength with such a combatant.

"I have seen these ladies before," said the Cardinal. "One at least was standing near a pillar in the chapel yesterday morning;" and he glanced at Marie, who was silent.

"I, too, was standing there, my Lord," said Beatrice, eagerly. "I was hidden only by my sister's superior height."

Marie looked sadly at Beatrice. She had purposely stood so as to shield her from the view of the Cardinal.

The Cardinal caught in a moment the thoughts of both. Marie's calm, thoughtful countenance instantly impressed him with a sense of a power within, which would render her invulnerable. Beatrice's eagerness to assert her share in the sin of the preceding day amused him. He determined at once on the line to take with them.

He still preserved a cold and severe manner.

"You would share a martyr's crown with your sister, child?" said he.

"I would not that she alone should bear the blame

of an action in which I had an equal share," replied Beatrice.

"And wherefore did you stand when all around were kneeling?" asked the Cardinal.

"Because our mother told us it was wrong to adore the Host," replied Beatrice, immediately.

"Was that your reason?" inquired the Cardinal, turning to Marie, who had not spoken.

"Our mother instructed us in the Word of God," replied Marie, simply, "and educated us according to the tenets of the Reformed Church; and as I believe not as the Church of Rome believes concerning the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, I dared not conform outwardly in an action to which my heart responded not."

"You loved your mother?" inquired the Cardinal, his stern voice changing to one of gentle inquiry.

The tears which started into the eyes of both the sisters were a better response than words.

"Enough, enough, I understand," said the Cardinal, with increasing kindness. "Ah, my children, you knew how to value the blessing of a good mother!" and his voice faltered. "I, too, had a mother—the gentlest, the best, the most devotedly religious. She trained me to love my Church, but she taught me that to shew love to man is the best proof we can give of love to God. Pardon this unwonted emotion," continued he, passing his hand across his eyes. "These

children's words unman me. A mother! What a blessing!"

The sisters were astonished. Beatrice could have flung her arms round his neck.

"How I have wronged him!" she thought. "I thought of him only as a hard and cruel Romanist; but he loved his mother. He weeps for her."

Marie was almost put off her guard by his gentleness; but she remembered the Vaudois. She saw in him the man who had urged on the Duke of Savoy to visit that unoffending people with fire and sword, and she trusted him not.

"Come, my daughters, tell me more of your good mother," said the Cardinal, after a few moments' silence. "I think I have heard her praises from more than one source. Was she not the daughter of a pastor in the Bernese Alps, who was so cruelly murdered by some misguided Catholics, while doing only what he thought his duty? Sad cruelties were committed by both parties in those days. Men's passions are calmer now. It is a difficult lesson for impetuous men to learn, but I believe," continued he, turning to the Duchess, "that both the Catholics and the Reformed are beginning to see that there is a better weapon than torture and the stake. But, my children," said he, courteously, "you will agree with me, that unless we can conform to Catholic customs, it is better not to attend Catholic services. It is un-

seemly to disturb others' devotions by what appears to them to savour of irreverence."

"My Lord," interrupted the Duchess, "I plead guilty to having taken these children into chapel with me without informing them previously where they were going. My heart was full of gratitude for the victory their noble father has helped to gain, and it escaped my mind, in the joy and excitement of the moment, that their father's daughters might scruple to unite with us in a thanksgiving service for God's mercies to our fleet."

"Then they are fully exonerated," replied he, smiling; "and now, farewell—we shall meet again."

"Your blessing, my Lord," said the Duchess, kneeling. The sisters hesitated not to kneel with her, and the blessing he pronounced on all had something paternal in it.

Beatrice could talk of nothing but the Cardinal. "How we have wronged him, Marie! How kind and gentle he is!"

His face, his voice, his eye, his hand—all supplied her with topics of admiration.

The poison had begun to work.

Beatrice possessed not the antidote with which Marie was furnished.

Marie watched again that night after Beatrice slept. Her heart was sad. Her sister seemed already fascinated by one whom she instinctively felt was not a

true man. A Vaudois valley rose before her. The calm moon shone upon a peaceful scene. The mother had hushed her little ones to rest; the elder children knelt at her side, while the father confessed the sins of the day, and implored God's blessing on them for the night. The aged grandmother's sightless eyes were upturned, and she looked as one who calmly waited a summons to her rest above. A few verses out of the Word of God were read, and the whole family laid down to rest. For a short time all was still in the valley. Suddenly the watch-dog awoke; a growl was heard, followed by repeated and furious barking. Then a howl, as of pain, and all was still. The father, aroused by the sound, looked from the casement, and perceived a band of men noiselessly approaching his dwelling. They were armed. He divined at once their errand—persecution was no strange thing to the poor Vaudois. One hurried look of agony at his wife and sleeping children.

A voice from the adjoining room—"My son, my son! our hour has come!"

The quick ear of the grandmother had heard the sounds. There was no escape. The house was surrounded. One savage yell arose. It echoed among the rocks. Was it not the voice of demons from the bottomless pit?

The door was forced. The husband dragged forth with mockery and blows, and flung, bleeding with

many death-wounds, upon the earth. One blow dismissed the aged grandmother to her longed-for home. The mother and the children—ah! Herod's soldiers were less cruel! They slaughtered but one in each family! In vain the mother presses the infant in her arms; in vain the awakened little ones cling in terror to each other! The sword descends upon each, and returns stained with the life-blood of these innocents! The shouts and cries of the murdered and murderers awake the surrounding cottagers. Some rush, half-naked, from their houses only to fall upon the swords of their dastardly assailants. Some are tortured—for worse than death are others reserved. One house is hurriedly barricaded. Fire is instantly applied, and the cruel soldiers mock the despairing agonies of the sufferers, who perish in the flames.

The cold moon looks calmly on, and ere she fades in the light of the rising morning, scarcely a dozen remain alive of the peaceful cottagers who went to rest, rejoicing in the prospect of another happy day. A few escape to bear the dismal tidings to the inhabitants of the higher valleys. Nothing remains in the lately smiling village of St Jean but blackened ruins and mutilated corpses. Did no Eye watch over the valley that night? Were the evening prayers in those dwellings uttered in vain? Ah! no. Many harps were in that hour tuned in the opening light of endless day, to sing for the first time the "new

song." They mourned not their sudden entrance into bliss ! But the guilty murderers ! No hills can hide, no rocks can cover them, from the wrath of the Lamb !

Marie knelt that night in earnest prayer for herself, for her sister, and for those misguided men who esteemed it a meritorious act to spoil, to burn, and to massacre their brothers of the same blood, for reading the Word of God, and obeying its blessed precepts.

She prayed, too, for the Cardinal ; but the wings of her prayer seemed to droop, as if they refused to bear up his name before the throne of the God of Truth and of Love.

CHAPTER XI.

SOME time elapsed before the sisters again saw the Cardinal. Marie began to hope that her fears were unfounded, and that she and her sister were in too humble a position to occupy more than a passing thought in his mind.

The next time they met him was in the corridor leading to the Duchess's rooms, as they were leaving her apartments. He passed them with a bow and a smile of recognition.

Meanwhile the illness of the Countess increased daily; and Felicie's face grew sadder and paler as each day she admitted the anxious sisters, for a few moments, to hear her report of the invalid.

But the expected return of their father principally occupied their thoughts. He had sent them several messages, telling of wounds and sufferings, and they were prepared to see him altered and broken in health; but when he actually arrived, as he did, unexpectedly, about three weeks after their interview with the Cardinal, their delight at seeing him was greatly lessened by the state of weakness to which he was reduced.

He pressed his daughters to his heart with grateful feelings. He was wearied of bloodshed and fighting. He was scarcely sixteen when first he buckled on his sword, and he had now numbered nearly three score years and ten. He longed to retire from active service, and to spend his few remaining years in peace with his children.

The Duke of Savoy had joined his Duchess at Turin, in order to give a grand reception to the soldiers and sailors who had shared the glory of Lepanto.

The Count's private reception was most gratifying to his feelings.

On requesting his dismissal from active service, great regret was expressed by the Duke at the idea of losing him; but when he pleaded his years and increasing infirmities, the plea was instantly acknowledged, and the desired permission conceded. A situation near the person of the Duke was offered to him, but, with the deepest sense of the honour done him, the aged soldier expressed his unshaken determination to retire from the world, and to spend the few years which his shattered health allowed him to reckon on at his own estate in Switzerland.

He required perfect rest, he said, after the life he had led.

"But, my Lord," said the Duchess, with great earnestness, "you will leave me one of your daughters?"

I had hoped, on your return, to attach them both to my person ; but your reasons for retirement are unanswerable, and I cannot feel a desire to rob you of both your children ; but spare me one, for a time at least."

"Your Grace does them much honour," said the Count.

"Not at all, my friend. It is a request founded on esteem and affection. I love your children, and cannot bear to part with them."

"Your Grace will excuse a decisive reply to your flattering proposal. I must consult my children. My own wishes I will relinquish at your Grace's bidding. I had looked forward to spending my latter years with both my daughters. The children have never been parted, and I cannot separate them contrary to their own will."

"Certainly not. I would by no means have an unwilling attendant," said the Duchess, with a tinge of *hauteur* in her manner.

"Your Grace is aware how profoundly I feel the honour you offer me," replied the old man. "I can never adequately express my deep feelings of gratitude to your Grace for your kindness to my children since I parted with them. They are fully aware of the honour and happiness of serving such a mistress ; but I require time for deliberation with them."

"Assuredly, my Lord, assuredly," replied the Duchess, with renewed kindness; and the brave soldier retired.

Beatrice's eyes sparkled when first told of the Duchess's proposal; but the next minute she turned to her sister, threw her arms around her neck, and wept passionately on her bosom.

Their father embraced them both. "My daughters, you shall not be parted contrary to your own inclinations;" and he repeated the gracious words of the Duchess.

"What are your wishes, father?" inquired Marie.

"My longing desire, originally, was to have you both with me in Soleure, but I feel unwilling to appear to slight the Duchess's kindness," replied their father.

"Then you would prefer that one of us should remain here?" said Marie, calmly.

"For a time. I feel it scarcely possible it should be otherwise."

"And which would you wish to leave?" said Marie, with a pale face and tearful eye.

"I shall need you, Marie, at home. I look to you for the aid which your mother used to afford me. If either remain, it must be Beatrice," replied he, placing his hand affectionately on her head, as she still clung weeping to Marie.

"But, Beatrice, my child," added he, tenderly, "I

would not have you unhappy. Should you be wretched to remain?"

"Not wretched to remain with the Duchess," replied Beatrice, smiling amidst her tears; "but wretched to lose my Marie."

"It will be only for a time, my child. I shall stipulate for your return home in two years," said the Count.

And so it was arranged.

One thing both the girls joined in earnestly requesting—namely, that they might publicly join the Reformed Church before they were parted.

For this purpose an instant journey was proposed to Geneva, whence they would return in time for the public reception of the victorious troops. As soon as the festivities attendant on their return were concluded, Marie would accompany her father to Soleure, and Beatrice would remain in Turin as one of the Duchess's maids of honour.

Had it not been for the love she bore her sister, Beatrice would have seen everything delightful in this arrangement. She loved the Duchess. She was prepared almost to love the Cardinal. She felt strong in her own principles, and feared none of the influences by which she would be surrounded. Indeed, her own private conviction was, that she should be instrumental in the conversion of some members of the court. "Even the Duchess, why should not she be converted?" thought Beatrice. "Humble instruments are sometimes

used to effect great things. A little maid gave good advice to Naaman's wife, and was listened to ; might not my words be as useful?" Beatrice had heard, with deep interest, the account which the Countess and Felicie had given of the Queen of Navarre, the Duchess's aunt. Her love for the Word of God—the protection she had afforded to persecuted members of the Reformed Church—the satires she had written on the lives of the Romish clergy—her letters to Briconet, Bishop of Meaux, which breathed such a truly Christian spirit—every detail of her life or sayings, Beatrice had treasured up. She forgot how Marguerite had temporised—how she had continued outwardly a member of a Church she despised, in order not to offend her idolised brother. The Duchess was thoroughly French at heart, and the opinions of the court of France had great weight with her. She loved the memory of her aunt; but hers had been the *only* Protestant influence potent at the French court. Francis had been a persecutor. Catherine of Medici, who at one time had constantly sung hymns and psalms, and even carried a Bible in her girdle to please the Queen of Navarre, this same Catherine had shewn herself a bitter persecutor, in spite of the earnest remonstrances of the heroic Jeanne d'Albret, daughter of Marguerite, and at present Queen of Navarre. Still she now appeared to be courting the Protestant party, and was about to marry her daughter to the Protestant prince of Na-

varre; and believing as she wished to believe, Beatrice hoped that the current of popular opinion in France was now setting towards the Reformed Faith. If France became Protestant, the Duchess would certainly incline to the true faith, and might not Beatrice help on the good work? Might not the word of truth, constantly repeated, gain entrance into the Duchess's heart, prepared, as it was, to look favourably on Protestantism by the love with which she regarded the memory of her aunt? And the Cardinal, too. He had a kind heart; might not even he be reached?

The Bishop of Meaux had embraced the truth of the Gospel; though the Bishop of Meaux had not, alas! had faith to stand to his principles in the hour of danger.

"If the Cardinal should ever be convinced that the Reformed Faith is the true one, he will fearlessly confess it," said Beatrice, one day to Marie, when her mind had been dwelling on these bright visions.

"If"—replied Marie.

"Hope the best, dear Marie; why should not the Cardinal be converted?"

"Dearest Beatrice," said Marie, with an intuitive glance into her sister's mind, "the Cardinal is not one who would listen to anything which you could urge."

"You remember the fable of the lion and the mouse, Marie?"

"Our good God keep you from the lion, if by the

lion you mean the Cardinal, dear Beatrice. Ah, dear Beatrice! it will be as much as you can do to keep yourself in the faith. Read the Bible, and try to induce others to read it; pray for them and for yourself. God can do great things; conversion is His work, though he does sometimes let us help in it."

"I long to help in it," said Beatrice, earnestly. "Surely some about the court would listen to the truth."

"If those whom we have seen here seemed really to care about their own religion, I should hope everything," replied Marie, sadly; "but everybody here seems immersed in politics, in business, or in pleasure. The Duke is always busy with his fortifications. The Duchess, kind and gentle as she is, has much to harass her. She is greatly occupied with her child; she depends on the Cardinal's advice for everything, and the Cardinal seems busy about everybody else's business as well as his own."

"If they would only read the Bible," said Beatrice.

"Ah, Beatrice! you know the Cardinal would not allow the Duchess to possess a Bible."

"Oh, Marie, if you were the one to stay, you would speak so much better than I can."

"Do not try to speak, dear child. Whenever I am asked a question on religious matters, I try to answer with a text of Scripture, I am so afraid of my own words. These clever people would get round us so

easily if we tried to argue. Let your actions speak, dear Beatrice. I do tremble when you inveigh so bitterly against the worship of the Virgin and the saints."

"I hate such folly," said Beatrice.

"I hate idolatry as much as you can do, dear Beatrice," replied Marie; "but the Bible never speaks bitterly or harshly."

"Why, Marie, our Lord himself called the Pharisees hypocrites. He spoke sharply enough to them."

"He saw their hearts, dear sister; he knew who were hypocrites. It does not become us to call each other such hard names. These Romish worshippers may be in earnest in their worship, and believe they are right, as firmly as we believe they are wrong."

"So much the worse for them," replied Beatrice.

"Not the worse for them to be in earnest. Sad that they have no better teachers than priests who refuse them the Word of God. Their ignorance should make us pity, not abuse them."

"But how can they be so silly?" said Beatrice, impatiently. "It is so absurd to go to the servant when you could go at once to the master."

"Well, Beatrice, their mothers taught them these errors just as earnestly as our dear mother taught us truth."

The conversation was here interrupted by a mes-

sage from Felicie. The Countess's hours were numbered. She wished to see her young friends once more.

With solemn feelings and tearful eyes the sisters hurried into the room. The aged lady was sitting up in bed, supported by pillows. She could not lie down from dread of suffocation. Felicie sat by her side, overwhelmed with grief. The Countess was perfectly calm. She looked at the girls as they entered with an expression of affection. They stood by her bed. Respiration was difficult; she could scarcely speak. "Peace," she whispered, "I can die in peace. My hope fails not sure and steadfast within the veil."

They knelt by her side. With an effort she placed her hand first on the head of one, then of the other, and pronounced a few words of blessing. A solemn silence ensued, broken only by the sobs of the two girls.

A priest, whom they had not before observed, approached the bed, and knelt in prayer.

It was a prayer in which all could join.

He spoke of the only hope of sinners, not of the cross which he held in his hand, but of the sacrifice which was offered on the cross for the sins of the world.

Felicie recovered herself during the prayer, and when it was ended, spoke a few words to the Coun-

tess, who opened her eyes, and fixed them on her with a look of intense love.

"My best friend," she whispered, "God is your Father."

She then looked at the priest, and made a sign towards Felicie. He understood her meaning.

"Your wishes shall be attended to ; I will care for your friend."

"You promise?" said the Countess, faintly.

"I promise," replied he, solemnly.

The girls were now removed. They imprinted a kiss on the already cold hand which was feebly stretched towards them, and passed weeping from the room. They never saw the Countess alive again. They gazed once more at her calm beautiful face, when all was over of earthly joy or grief.

Scarcely had the breath left the body, when the Count de la Trinité arrived. His wife, the Countess's daughter, had been many years in her grave. He seized at once all the valuables of the deceased, and behaved in the most heartless manner to Felicie. He all but turned her out of doors. "There has been heresy here long enough," said he ; "Turin is no place for heretics. Madame Arnaud has been supported long enough by our family. She may go back to her own people ;"—the people this cruel man had done his best to extirpate!

Houseless, penniless would Felicie have been, but

for the loving forethought of her departed mistress. Perfectly aware of her son-in-law's character, she had entrusted the priest with money and jewels to a considerable amount, in order that her aged friend might be provided for.

The priest was one who had received the teaching of Scripture, though he still continued outwardly a Romanist. He took Felicie for a few weeks into his own house. There he watched over her as if she had been his mother; and she required many weeks of tender care, as her long attendance on her mistress, and intense grief at her loss, brought on an illness which confined her for some days to her bed, and left her as weak as a child.

She was still in the priest's house when Marie and Beatrice returned from Geneva, after their first communion in the Reformed Church.

CHAPTER XII.

THE fête day, so long eagerly anticipated by all Turin, arrived. The Duke and Duchess headed a procession which went forth to meet the soldiers and sailors who had been engaged in the battle of Lepanto.

The streets were hung with garlands of flowers ; flags and tapestry waved from every balcony and window. Guns were firing from an early hour in the morning, and a large body of infantry and cavalry formed in the large square in which the ducal palace stands.

Precisely at ten o'clock, the palace-gates flew open, and the Duke and Duchess appeared, mounted on horseback, attended by the whole court. Twelve young ladies, of whom Beatrice was one, in crimson velvet robes, and white satin hats, ornamented with ostrich feathers, rode immediately after the Duchess on white palfreys. Twelve equerries, in violet coloured doublets and black velvet hats, followed the ladies, on black horses ; then came a royal carriage, in which was seated the young Prince of Savoy, with

his governess and two attendants. A train of noble ladies and gentlemen, riding side by side, succeeded the carriage, followed by four hundred picked men belonging to the regiments which had served in the Spanish wars.

Then, conspicuous by his lofty carriage and haughtily condescending manner, rode the Cardinal, in his rich robes of state, on a beautiful mule, whose housings, decorated with precious stones, swept the ground. A large number of ecclesiastics accompanied him, and a fine body of cavalry closed the procession.

The Duke and Duchess, preceded at some little distance by another body of soldiers, advanced to the gate of the city, which was open. Above, it was beautifully adorned with flags and garlands, giving it the appearance of a triumphal arch. Two bands, stationed on either side of the gate, struck up a strain of martial music. As the Duke and Duchess reached the gate, a procession was seen advancing from the country; the gray-headed Count Julien rode at the head of a few warriors, but many of the brave fellows whom their sovereigns had advanced thus far to meet were unable either to ride or walk, and three large, heavy, open carriages, drawn by six horses each, bore the majority of the survivors of this glorious, yet terrible victory. Following these, came a band of men on whom all gazed with the deepest emotion; they were Christian slaves, to

whom the victory of Lepanto had given freedom. All the recovered captives who had been found to belong to the Duke of Savoy's territories had been brought home in his gallies, and eager eyes were searching the ranks of the wretched-looking captives, in the hope of finding some relation long lost, and considered as hopelessly dead to his friends and country.

Few could recognise, in the wrecks of manhood which that crowd presented, any face once dear and well known.

When the bands ceased to play, the Duke dismounted from his horse, and advanced towards Count Julien, who had uncovered his gray locks as his master approached, and also dismounted from his charger. He knelt before his sovereign, but the Duke raised him from his knee, and pressed him in his arms, amid the wildly enthusiastic cheering of all around. No words were heard; it was a prolonged and continued shout of delight while the Duke passed from one to another of his brave soldiers and sailors, and shook hands with each individually. He then presented Count Julien to the Duchess, who gave him her hand to kiss, and desired him to ride at her right hand. It had been intended that she should remain within the gate, but when she saw the waggons bearing the wounded soldiers, she forgot all etiquette, and riding up to the side of the carriages,

joined her husband in his inquiries and congratulations.

The poor fellows looked as if they could have worshipped her, so deeply does feminine sympathy affect the hearts of the brave. Her hands were seized, and covered with tears and kisses. This welcome concluded, the Duke and Duchess simultaneously turned to the liberated slaves. The Duchess burst into tears, so powerfully did the sight of these miserable objects, and the remembrance of their sufferings, affect her. They crowded around her, and kissed the hem of her garments.

It was some minutes before she could say one kind or cheering word. The infection of her sympathy spread around, till the whole multitude of gazers, who thronged every house, and clung to every wall, roof, or window, which afforded a glimpse of the scene, were dissolved in tears.

Recovering herself with some difficulty, she joined the Duke in promising every possible assistance to the miserable captives in recovering their friends and property. She then returned with the Duke to the position they had previously occupied within the gate. The trumpets again sounded, and the shouts of the people redoubled. The carriages bearing the returned soldiers now took their place in the procession, immediately behind the Duke and Duchess, whose own attendants consequently fell back.

It was at this moment, when a slight confusion had resulted from falling back in a narrow space, that Beatrice's horse became restive. She had not been accustomed to horse exercise in her native mountains, and drawing her rein too tightly, the animal she rode was almost pulled back on his haunches. She nearly slipped from her saddle, and had she fallen among the closely-wedged crowd which surrounded her, fatal consequences must have ensued. But a young man rushed from among the spectators, and seizing her horse's bridle with one hand, with the other he supported her slight and trembling frame in the saddle. It was all the work of a few moments; her danger—her rescue. The shrill shriek of the young lady by whose side she was riding, changed into delighted ecstasy as she found Beatrice resuming her position in the cavalcade, with flushed cheek and added beauty.

The stranger walked for a few moments by her side, to encourage the frightened horse, as well as the timid rider.

"Hold your reins loosely," he whispered. "Your horse knows its work, and will bear you safely on. Are you frightened now?" added he, looking encouragingly at the face which beamed on him like a beautiful vision.

"No, no," she said, "not frightened now. My father will thank you."

He required no thanks beyond the glance of gratitude from those lovely eyes. He smiled, bowed, and retired amidst the throng, still following Beatrice with his eyes.

She turned not her head to look at him again.

The bands played, the people shouted, the pageant proceeded, of which Beatrice formed a part, and, till that moment, an animated and delighted part; but she had felt those dark soft eyes look into her own. She had seen the look of interest her danger called forth. His voice had sounded in her ears as no voice had ever sounded before. The whole had passed like a dream, but all around her was changed. She heard nothing, saw nothing, felt nothing, but the beaming glance of those eyes. Happy it was for her that her well-trained horse did know its duties, and carried her in safety round the ramparts, and down again into the city, and finally back to the palace, where a grand feast was prepared for the soldiers and sailors. The Duke and Duchess dined at a table, at the upper end of the banqueting-hall, with their court standing around them; the Cardinal alone sitting at table with them.

While the banquet proceeded, Beatrice was at her place, and many an eye admiringly regarded her beauty; but she saw not their glances, and heard nothing of their remarks. Nor did she feel the fatigue which the other ladies experienced at the

tedious length of the repast. Most truly, however, was she glad to be released from attendance, which ceased the moment the Duchess left the banqueting-hall, that she might go to her own room to enjoy the luxury of thinking over the events of the day alone.

There was joy and thankfulness, deep and heartfelt, in not a few houses in Turin that night. Many an absent one had returned to gladden the heart of parent, wife, sister, or child, who received them as if rising from the grave. Many hearts there were also which were aching, with a sense of bitter desolation, for the husband, the brother, or the son, who had gone forth with the troops in full health and vigour but a few months previously, and who had found a grave in the deep waters of Lepanto's Gulf—desolation the deeper felt amid the gaiety and rejoicing which reigned around.

The good Priest, Felicie's friend, had gone forth that morning with the procession, and when the soldiers and sailors had entered the palace, he had joined with the crowd in offers of service to the Christian slaves, who were seeking to gain tidings of relatives or friends. He approached an aged man, of remarkably mild countenance, who stood alone, and appeared making no inquiry,

"Can I help you, my friend?" said he, kindly.
"Have you no relation in this city?"

"I believe I have no relation in the world," he replied sadly.

"Have you been long a prisoner among the Turks?" inquired the Priest, still more kindly.

"More than thirty years," replied the man.

"And whence were you taken?"

The man looked sadly at him, and his eyes filled with tears.

"I look back from childhood," said he, "on scenes of bloodshed and cruelty. I can have no rest in this world. I have longed for death while with the Turks. I long for it now I am with the Christians, and it comes not. His will be done," added he, looking upwards, with a sigh.

"There remaineth a rest," said the Priest, quietly.

"Ah!" said the poor wanderer, looking earnestly on him, "say that Scripture word again. How long since I heard a text of Scripture!"

"There remaineth, therefore, a rest to *the people of God*," repeated the Priest.

"No home here," murmured the poor man; "rest above."

"Come with me, my friend; I have a shelter at least to offer. Come with me to-day; you need refreshment and rest."

With a weak and timid step, the poor man followed the benevolent Priest. When he had entered his house, the Priest seated his guest in a cool room over-

looking a small garden, and placed some food before him. While he ate (giving thanks before he touched his food), his kind host went up the stairs, and knocked at the door of a neat upper room. "Come in," from a gentle voice, invited him to enter; and closing the door behind him, he took the chair which Felicie offered.

"I want your help, my friend," said he to the gentle Vaudois, who was slowly rallying from the first effects of her loss; and he recounted the scene he had witnessed in the square, and told of the broken and miserable aspect of his poor visitor. "Now," he said, smiling, "you women are much better at comforting than we men are. Will you oblige me by coming down stairs to this poor fellow, and seeing what you can make of him?"

Felicie instantly assented, and accompanied the Priest into the lower room.

The simple meal was despatched, and he was sitting, with his head resting on his hand, in melancholy musing, but he looked up with an expression of thankfulness when the Priest entered. At the sight of a woman, he rose, bowed, and a slight colour tinged his pale cheek. He seemed advanced in years, and yet he might have looked older than he really was.

"Sit down, my friend," said the Priest. "I have brought you a companion—one who has known sor-

row herself. I must go out to my duties, and shall leave Madame Arnaud with you."

"Arnaud!" said the man, gazing eagerly at her.

"Yes—Madame Arnaud; knew you any of that name?"

"Long, long ago," said the man, sighing.

"Well, well; talk with her, and I will come again presently," and he left the room.

The almost withered heart of the poor wanderer revived under the sweet words which Felicie uttered, and his tale was soon told. Not to interrupt our own tale too much, I must shorten his. It was one of those romantic incidents with which real life abounds, but which seem forged in the pages of romance. The poor wanderer's earliest recollections were amongst the Vaudois valleys. He remembered a mother, a father, a sister, and a happy home. The spoiler came, and in one night all he loved were numbered with the dead, and himself carried away a prisoner. A few years of captivity amongst his conquerors passed heavily on, and then they had actually sold him to the Turks. His life had been one of unmingled trial and desolation as to outward circumstances, yet the words of truth implanted by his parents had never been forgotten. He continued a Christian among the unbelievers, and to many of the slaves among whom his lot had been cast he had proved a help and teacher. He had had his moments of happiness in the midst of

his trials, and he had ever been sustained by the bright hope of meeting his beloved relations in another world.

Felicie's tears had flowed often during the recital. At length she said—

“Did all your family perish?”

“All, I believe. I saw them lie weltering in their blood: father—mother, with the baby at her breast—sisters and brothers! Oh! the sight has haunted me ever since. I never see the full moon shining at night that I am not reminded of the awful scene!”

“I, too, am a Vaudois!” said Felicie.

“You! madame.”

“Yes; I, too, lived in the village of Praviglielmo before that dreadful night. That night saw me an orphan, and the only one left of a happy family; but a soldier rescued me from among the dying and the dead, and I was brought to the castle of a noble lady, whose daughter treated me as her own sister. With the daughter of that house I have lived till within the last few weeks, when her death left me homeless. This kind Priest received me into his house. I am an Arnaud from the village of Praviglielmo!”

The old man gazed at her with a bewildered air; but when the real meaning of her words flashed upon his mind, he looked upwards with an expression of heartfelt gratitude, and then, tottering across the room, clasped the outstretched hands of Felicie within his

own, exclaiming, in a voice almost inaudible from emotion—

“ My sister !—my sister ! ”

I will here close the history of these Vaudois. The good Priest heartily rejoiced in the union of which his kindness had been the means. The funds left in his charge for Felicie's comfort were fully sufficient, under his good management, for the support of both brother and sister. The respite afforded to the Vaudois, by the intercession of the Duchess, had made their native valleys once more a place of safety ; and in the home of their birth the brother and sister, so wonderfully restored to each other, lived the few remaining years of their lives, and there both closed their eyes in peace.

CHAPTER XIII.

"WHAT do you think of our capital, my son?" inquired the Cardinal of a young man who was busily occupied in reading in the library of the archiepiscopal palace, on the day succeeding the banquet given to the returned heroes of Lepanto.

The young man rose respectfully as soon as he became aware of the Cardinal's presence, and replied to the question with a smile.

"At least, you thought the procession a grand one yesterday?" continued the Cardinal.

"I saw a large concourse of human beings," replied the young man; "some of them gaily dressed, many looking happy and interested; but I reflected only with sadness, that doubtless each carried some secret sorrow—that each wanted, or would want, a comforter; and perhaps scarcely two in all the crowd knew where to find one."

"Philosopher always; do you never relax or enjoy?"

"I cannot," replied the young man. "I feel that life is such an earnest thing, and that death is so

surely drawing nearer every hour, that I cannot forget it."

"Right, right," rejoined the Cardinal. "It is you men who are thoroughly in earnest who do great things for the Church."

"Will your Eminence give me work to do?" said the young man.

"Already? Why, you have only just arrived from work."

"My flock in the mountains were my pleasure as much as my work," replied the Priest.

"You have had great success in your work?" said the Cardinal, inquiringly, and sitting down near the young man with a confidential air.

"I fear to speak of my poor services to the Church, my Lord," said the young man, modestly.

"Not at all, not at all; I know your success has been of no common kind. Do you suppose," continued he, smiling, "I should have received you here if I had not known the kind of man you were? You are lent to me, you know, for a time."

The young man bowed.

"Obedience, obedience, obedience," said the Cardinal, emphatically; "the first, second, and third rule for a monk, especially a Jesuit."

"I am aware of it, my Lord," replied the young Jesuit. "My superior would not tell you I had failed in this first duty."

"Then I must now command you to reply unreservedly to any questions I may ask?"

The Jesuit bowed.

"Are you not a Swiss by birth?"

"I believe so," replied the young man; "but I know not who my parents were. When still an infant, I was committed to the care of a lady, who lived not far from Interlachen. She treated me with kindness and affection, but mingled with it so much sternness and reserve, that I feared as much as loved her."

"What were her chief lessons?"

"Hatred of lying, and obedience to the Church. She trained me to think nothing but the service of the Church worth living for. I once ventured to ask her my parentage and early history, but met with so stern a refusal that I dared not repeat the inquiry."

"She made you obey her, then?"

"I never dreamed of resisting her will. She placed me under the training of some priests of the new order of Jesus, and wished me, when old enough, to join that order."

"How came you to save Strasburg Cathedral?"

"I was engaged as a preacher there. The city had been stirred up by heretical preaching, and a disorderly mob had entered that beautiful building, and were beginning to break its sacred images and to despoil its treasures."

"And you turned them from their purpose?"

"Yes," said the young man. "I believe I acted under a Divine impulse in getting into the pulpit, and addressing the people with all the energy the emergency called forth. They listened—were calmed—and the cathedral was saved."

"Nobly done," said the Cardinal. "The world rang with it."

"My superior," continued the young man, "kindly distinguished me after this fortunate moment. Finding I earnestly wished to traverse my native country in order to seek to stem the heretical torrent, which had well nigh overwhelmed it, he sent me forth with the cross in my hand, and the love of the blessed Virgin in my heart."

"What state did you find the country in?"

"The valleys were too deeply tainted for much to be done there, but in the mountains I found many true hearts, who continued strongly attached to Rome, though they had given way at the first preaching of the heretical teachers. But the state of the country about V—— was grievous. Chapels with bare walls—images broken—altars thrown down—no mass celebrated—religion, in fact, destroyed."

"Sad state, indeed. Did no heretical preacher remain amongst them?"

"A canting fanatical fellow had been there for a time, and the true pastors had been driven away, but he had

passed to other work. Happily he had left no Bibles. That irremediable evil was spared these honest people. I doubt if they could have read them ; but there is something in the very presence of that book which nourishes heresy."

"True ; most true," said the Cardinal. "What steps did you take?"

"The first thing I did was to procure new decorations for the chapels. Many of the faithful in Strassburg helped me in this. I then celebrated daily mass at one chapel after another, and visited from house to house to recall the people to the confessional. The women hailed me with delight. They flocked around me ; and in a few months, in all the mountain district, I believe there was not one who did not attend the mass again."

"Then why did you leave that work?"

"My work was done. The mass once re-established—the parochial clergy returned to their flocks—all things returned to their pristine order and beauty, and I was no longer needed there."

"And now," said the Archbishop, "your work is to be amongst the educated classes."

"Yes," replied the young man. "My superior had been led to notice the rapid spread of heresy among the higher classes, and was anxious to turn every available engine in that direction. My early life and education had not fitted me to combat error

amongst the men of this class. My superior, therefore, advised me to lay aside my clerical garb, that I might associate freely with the worldly and the gay, and seek to acquire, as a layman, the confidence which, in these degenerate days, might be denied to an ecclesiastic. He was debating in his own mind where he should send me, when your letter arrived, telling of the devotion of your Duke and Duchess to Rome, and speaking of the openings Turin presented for any who desire to be useful in the Church. He immediately decided on recommending me to your Eminence, hoping that you might be able to train me for some usefulness here."

"You will need little training," said the Cardinal. "You have shewn zeal for the Church, and devotion to her best interests. I must say," added he, smiling, "you make a tolerably good-looking layman, with your Paris wig and lace ruffles. How do you like the change from the clerical garb?"

"Obedience, my Lord, is our rule," replied the young man. "My superior ordered the change. I desire not to think which dress I should prefer. I confess I like the idea of seeing something of life in a court. Idleness would be a grievous penance to me; one which I hope you will not see good to inflict."

"Do not fear; I will find work for you. You may study here whenever you please. I shall be glad of your pen, and your head, too, at times. I will assign

you an apartment in this palace, for the present at least; but in public you must not often be seen with me. If you were considered a servant of mine, your usefulness might be lessened. You must see as much of life as possible in the capital. I shall present you to the Duchess, of course. A cordial reception at the palace will introduce you at once to the gayest society. You must associate with the young noblemen of Turin. You must not be afraid of the gaming-table; and you must frequent all places of public resort, in order to see a different phase of life from that to which you have been accustomed."

"I shall feel strange at first," said the young man, colouring.

"That feeling will soon pass away. Hearts are the same everywhere, whether the bodies in which they are encased are clothed in ermine or russet. You have, of course, made character your study?"

"How is it possible to do otherwise?" replied the young Priest. "As a doctor studies the various bodily constitutions, so the priest must study the endless varieties of mental conformation which everywhere present themselves before him."

"You have marked, of course, how each mind has its peculiar bias, its peculiar *lares* and *penates*, I may call them, the real gods which govern it. Every object presented to it is coloured by this bias, and

strengthens it; though to another mind exactly an opposite effect would be produced by the same cause. To influence another you must find out his peculiar bias; to influence others you must seek to be influenced by none. Never open your own real mind to another: you increase its power by concentration; you weaken it by opening it out. You must *appear* open and candid, but ever keep your inner heart carefully locked. Trust no one but me; I am your sole friend and confidant."

"You, my Lord," said the young man, astonished; "you condescend to be my friend!"

"Surely, surely, my son," replied the Cardinal. "Whoever loves the Church must be the friend of so faithful a son of the Church as yourself. But come," continued he, "what are we to call you? I would fain call you David, as you have slain more than one Goliath already. Your name as a monk I know; what was your baptismal name?"

"Francisco, my Lord," replied the young man.

"Well, let us see. Don Francisco di Compostello will do; there is a large and scattered family of that name. I shall give out that you are of Spanish extraction, and have been educated in France, and are completing your travels previous to your return to your own country. French and Italian are both your native languages?"

"Oh yes, and I spent some years in Paris under the

followers of Jesus, and became well acquainted with the Castilian also."

"That will do, then. You know the share Savoy had in the late victory of Lepanto; that is the prevailing topic still. You will be welcomed at once, if you profess yourself an admirer of our national greatness. By the by, remember moderation is the order of the day just now in religious views. We are becoming enlightened and merciful; and the torture, the sword, and the fire, as helps to religion, are not in vogue. Alva's work in the Netherlands disgusted many."

"That suits me in verity," replied the young man. "I prefer propagating the truth by preaching. I feel no pleasure in coercing those who differ from us."

"Oh yes, yes; gentleness is the best weapon to try first; but if that should fail, success must be gained by any means."

"But, my Lord," replied the monk, hesitatingly, "violence and torture will not convince mind."

"But they force bodies into outward conformity," said the Cardinal.

"But of what avail before God is outward conformity, when the heart is wanting?" asked the monk, still more diffidently.

"The Church takes no heed of that," replied the Cardinal. "The Church must rule; she must be obeyed. She opens her arms to receive returning

penitents; but if any continue refractory, such must be treated as you treat children at school: they must be *made to obey*; they must be coerced into obedience."

"And if punishment fails to procure obedience?" asked Francisco.

"Then the refractory member must be cut off," sternly replied the Cardinal. "The sin of disobedience to the Church is deadly in its character, and fatal in its effects on others. It were best for Christendom that all who dare to oppose God's vicar upon earth should be cut off out of the land of the living. It is mercy to the faithful, for there is something so flattering and specious in heresy that it is sure to spread like a pestilence whenever it appears, unless most stringent measures are taken to prevent it. Savoy is very free from the pestilential taint, thanks to the lesson our Duke early gave his people through the Vaudois, who are the most determined heretics the world ever saw. But though the Duke and Duchess will not tolerate error in the general way, even in their court we are not secure from the intrusion of the poisonous doctrine. The Duchess has now a young heretic about her person, and if we do not convert her, she will assuredly pervert some of our people."

"Surely she cannot stand in error with the truth all around her?" remarked Francisco.

"We shall see, we shall see," returned the Cardinal. "I intend she shall be converted, but the best means to use I have not yet arrived at."

Francisco was deeply interested by his conversation with the Cardinal. His candour and openness, and the confidence he appeared to repose in him, were flattering to the young man. He listened to every word he said with the profoundest reverence. He adopted without examination his views and opinions. It had never occurred to him that he was acting a lie in laying aside his clerical garb. He had been trained to hate lying, and yet to consider obedience to the Church a primary duty. Thus, when the Church told him to act a lie, that lie ceased to be regarded by him as a sin. By this first step in the downward course his spiritual perceptions began to be blunted. He was ready for any other downward step.

His reception at court, under the patronage of the Cardinal, was of course satisfactory. He speedily found himself in a position to become conversant with all that he desired to know.

He became all things to all men, in order to gain some, in a sense different from that which the apostle intended. He adopted the character of a gay cavalier, and acted his part to perfection. He drank, and gamed, and even swore, as the other nobles did. But with him there was ever a vein of earnestness beneath his wildest sallies. He was never carried away

by the excitement he feigned—nor had these scenes of dissipation any real attraction for him. Yet did his religious impressions become fainter and fainter, under the influence of the life he led. At times he sighed for his more congenial work among the mountains, but his life of dissipation was in obedience to orders which he never dreamed of resisting.

The Cardinal daily gained more and more influence over him. There was a fascination about that extraordinary man which few could resist. He ruled over the minds of his dependents as despotically as Philip of Spain ruled over the bodies of his subjects.

CHAPTER XIV.

A FEW weeks had elapsed since Count Julien and his daughter had reached the rugged old castle in which to them all the delights of home were centered.

Marie sighed often, as she missed her sister at every turn ; but she devoted herself to learn her father's ways and wishes, and soon became essential to his happiness.

The affectionate daughter had the happiness of seeing her father's health gradually improving in the quiet of his own home. He was gladly received by his neighbours, as a soldier whose fame added glory to the country of his birth ; and Marie's life was no longer as retired as it had been in former days. Still she found amongst the young ladies of Soleure not one whose affection or companionship could at all compensate for the loss of her darling Beatrice. Correspondence was not a frequent thing in those days, and the letters that passed between the sisters were few and far between. Nor had either of them the faculty of readily expressing her thoughts on paper ; so that their letters would not add to the interest of

our pages. Marie was obliged to wait for the end of the two years, for which period Beatrice was lent to the Duchess, before she could hope for a renewal of the intercourse which had hitherto been the charm of her existence, and the loss of which she most keenly felt.

M. D'Albret visited the chateau shortly after the return of the Count, and brought with him the young priest, whose conversation with him was detailed at length in an earlier period of this history.

M. Bernau's mind had been deeply impressed by the truths which the old Pastor had brought, for the first time, before his mind. He returned to his flock at Lucerne, but he resolved to read the Word of God with more attention than he had ever previously done; and the result of his studies was soon manifest in his preaching. Whenever he preached, the cathedral was crowded, and his hearers soon became as much in earnest in religion as their teacher was. The attention of his superiors was excited, and his sermons were examined and criticised. Germs of heresy were indubitably to be found in them, and he was summoned before his Bishop to clear himself from the charge.

Secret intelligence being given him that very secure, but not very desirable quarters were preparing for him, he sought safety in flight. He secretly left Lucerne, and escaping to the canton of Berne, took

shelter with the aged Bernese Pastor, who received him with open arms.

Many and earnest were the conversations they held on religious subjects, and, one by one, the young man relinquished the errors he had held, more from education than conviction, until he was a Papist at heart no longer, and desired openly to profess his adhesion to the Genevese communion.

His father, who was a highly respectable and wealthy merchant, had married in early life a lady of good family, and had removed into Germany when his eldest son took orders in the Romish Church. There he, too, had received the Reformed Faith. He had met with many family losses, and the tidings that his eldest son could be restored to him was hailed as a peculiar blessing.

Previous to joining his parents in Germany, M. Bernau accompanied M. D'Albret to spend a few days in Count Julien's castle.

The old soldier received both his guests cordially; but hearing of the change that had taken place in Bernau's religious views, he was almost inclined to withdraw from him his hospitality.

"It is all very well for you, Pastor," said the Count; "you have been one of the Reformed for many years. I remember hearing that you were frightened by Zwingle's preaching when you were in the very act of performing mass, and at once cast all

your priestly vestments away. These were exciting days, and, besides, we need none of us have the sins of our youth thrown in our teeth; but what has a young fellow like him to do with these controversies? I don't like turncoats. People should stick to the religion they are brought up to. All the young men, nowadays, think that they know better than their fathers and mothers. No, no; let Protestants alone, I say—let them go to heaven or hell their own way; but why in the world should not Papists do the same?—why interfere with them?"

"Why, my Lord, they have pretty well turned M. Bernau out of the Romish Church. He had not much choice about the matter," replied M. D'Albret.

"How? why?" asked the Count.

"Well, he began to read the Bible, and to preach to the people out of the Word of God, instead of letting them go to sleep with legends of saints and martyrs; and when the cathedral filled to overflowing, and everybody was talking of the young preacher, the Bishop sent for M. Bernau to clear himself from the charge of heresy."

"While he was still acting as a priest?" interrupted the Count.

"Yes, my Lord, and when he had no thought of leaving Rome," answered the Pastor. "A friend gave him a secret hint that the Bishop had some idea of giving him a very *warm* reception."

"Rather warmer than was agreeable, eh?" said the Count.

"Exactly so," replied D'Albret, smiling; "and not particularly desiring to be cooked for the amusement of his diocesan, and the edification of devout Romanists, he left Lucerne secretly, and did not feel himself safe till he got into a Protestant canton."

"Well, well, I think I should have done the same in his place," said the Count. "I stood the Turkish fire pretty well, but that was for the good of my country; the stake is a very different matter. I should have been very sorry to have heard that the poor fellow had been reduced to ashes—good for nothing but to manure a garden; he's too young and well-looking for that. But what's he come into Soleure for, eh? We are good Catholics here."

"He is not afraid of being delivered up to Lucerne by you, my Lord," replied the Pastor. "The Swiss understand freedom better than to give up converted Romanists to the tender mercies of the Church they have left."

"To be sure, to be sure; he's safe enough here. But I must have some talk with him about his reasons for leaving his Church," said the Count.

"By all means, my Lord."

And so skilfully did the old Pastor and Bernau conduct the conversation which followed, that they gave the old Count more insight into Christian truth

than he had ever had before ; and though he staunchly continued to stand up for Rome, he was often seen with a Bible in his hands, seeking out of it the best weapons wherewith to slay his enemies ; and as weapons taken from the Word of God, and employed against Protestants, are rather apt to recoil upon those who use them, we will leave the Count with the certain hope that his Popery will one day receive from the sword of the Spirit an effectual stab, and that those who loved him best will have cause to rejoice that he ever came in contact with Frederic Bernau.

CHAPTER XV.

THERE was a great fête given at Rivoli by the Duchess of Savoy in honour of the birthday of her son. The Cardinal quitted Turin to honour it with his presence, and he was accompanied by Don Francisco di Compostello.

The Duchess received the Cardinal, as usual, with marked distinction. After a few minutes' conversation with her, the Archbishop turned to address himself to her ladies, while she condescendingly entered into conversation with the handsome cavalier, whom he again presented to her. Beatrice stood in her place, radiant with beauty, of which the rich costume she had adopted, in compliance with the customs of the court, heightened the effect. While apparently engaged with one of the elder ladies-in-waiting, the Cardinal was attentively watching the countenance of the beautiful girl, which, like a mirror, reflected all that was passing in her mind. Her whole attention was absorbed by Francisco. With a sparkling eye, and heightened colour, she was watching him; her lips parted, and her head inclined towards him, seeking to catch every tone of his voice. As the Duchess turned from him

to speak to some other guests, Francisco's eye caught a sight of Beatrice's beaming face. He started, looked for a second inquiringly as their eyes met, and then, his face relaxing into a smile of recognition, he bowed low. A graceful inclination of her head acknowledged the courtesy. Her colour rose to her very temples. Francisco retired from the ducal circle without addressing a word to Beatrice.

The Cardinal had observed everything, and continued to watch Beatrice's varying colour. Though her eyes followed not the young man as he mixed with the crowd, her countenance assumed a pleased and thoughtful expression, and it seemed to the Cardinal as if she retired into herself, satisfied with that single look of recognition.

As soon as the Cardinal could do so unobserved, he approached Francisco, touched his arm, and invited him to walk into the gardens, which were brilliantly illuminated.

"The Duchess received you favourably again," said the Cardinal. "Were you a courtier, your fortune would be considered made."

"Thanks to your Grace's introduction," said the young man, carelessly.

"Not altogether. Your own address and manner have a share in her Grace's condescension," replied the Cardinal. "But Lady Beatrice; have you been in her company before?"

"Is that the name of the fair young maid of honour who bowed to me? I was the means of rendering her a trifling service on the reception-day of the troops from Lepanto. Her horse had nearly thrown her, and my arm brought him to order. I had never seen her since till her face appeared in the Duchess's circle this evening."

"She regards you favourably, if I ever saw into a woman's mind. Follow it up. She is the heretic I told you of," said the Cardinal.

"That beautiful creature a heretic! Nay, my Lord, that must not be allowed," replied the young man, earnestly.

"Convert her then," replied the Cardinal; "there she is!" and a sudden opening in the alley they were traversing shewed a seat at a little distance, on which Beatrice was sitting with a young companion, Susetta Bernotti.

"Ah! how charming, Beatrice, to be allowed to wander where one likes for a little while. Our good mistress is very considerate to dismiss us while she dances. But you are silent; do you not enjoy this exquisite evening? *Veramente!*" said the merry girl, "here comes the Cardinal and that magnificent young cavalier with him. You may talk to the Cardinal," whispered she, as they approached, "I shall prefer the cavalier!"

But Susetta was doomed to disappointment. The

Cardinal, with the blandest manner possible, came up to the seat, and presented Francisco at once to Beatrice.

Beatrice coloured deeply, but her self-possession did not desert her. She replied simply to Francisco's compliments, and then expressed her sorrow that her father had quitted Turin without being able to ascertain to whom he owed his thanks for the prompt assistance which had been so kindly given her on the day of the reception.

No thanks could be required for the honour and pleasure of rendering her so trifling a service. He took this opportunity of thanking her for having allowed him the privilege of giving her the smallest assistance.

A sparkling expressive look from Beatrice rewarded this pretty compliment.

"How do you like Turin?" was the next question.

"I should like it better if my sister were still with me," replied Beatrice.

"She has left you then?"

"Yes," said Beatrice; "my father required the rest of home after his many years' campaigning, and my sister accompanied him to Soleure."

"Your father has well earned repose," said the young man. "His gallant deeds are bruited far and wide. Savoy has had no nobler defender. It is a pleasure to me to have looked on him once, before he

quitted the busy scenes where he will be remembered with distinguished honour, as long as there are any hearts left to respond to high and honourable deeds!"

Beatrice's eyes sparkled with delight at this tribute to her father. The Cardinal turned from Susetta, with whom he had been laughing in a way which had entirely won her heart.

"The Duchess, Lady Beatrice, has promised to honour my poor house with her presence one day next week, and it will give me great pleasure to see you in her suite," said he; "and you, too, *cara mia*," continued he, turning to Susetta.

"Your Eminence honours us with your notice; but we must go only where we are bid, like good children," said Susetta, demurely.

"I hope it will not be unpleasant to you, if the Duchess bids you attend her to my palace?"

"By no means, my Lord; your Grace's entertainments are the pleasantest we go to."

"You are a courtier, child," said the Cardinal, laughing. "I hope Lady Beatrice will find them as agreeable."

Poor Beatrice had food enough for her already smitten imagination. Each word, each look of Francisco's was treasured up in her memory, and counted over and over as a miser counts his hoards.

"Follow up your advantage," said the Cardinal as they walked away, "and Beatrice is won. Another convert to add to your many laurels."

"But, my Lord," stammered Francisco, "I have not said one word to her about her religion."

"No, foolish boy, but you have laid siege to her heart, or, if not laid siege, you have taken it by storm; the fortress is open, you have nothing to do but to walk in, and that girl will do anything for *love*."

"Love! True: I can suppose so—but such love as a monk has no business to excite," replied Francisco, somewhat indignantly.

"Francisco, listen to me. Do you believe that girl will be damned if she continues a rebel from our holy Church?"

Francisco crossed himself hastily. "There is no salvation out of the pale of the Church."

"Then will it not be a mercy to save her soul at any price—by any means? Eternal fire—hopeless misery for ever—how awful!" said the Cardinal, solemnly, as he made the sign of the cross. "The Virgin and the saints preserve her from it!"

"Amen, amen," said the monk, earnestly; "but are there no other means which could be taken? Love, which must be disappointed, is a cruel weapon to use. Surely fair arguments and the weight of authority would avail with such a child?"

"Not with that girl," said the Cardinal. "She has been nurtured on the Bible. She sucked in heresy with her mother's milk. She is a heretic to the backbone."

"Then no earthly attachment, even if excited, could change her views and her heart," returned Francisco.

"Granted. But she may, by means of an earthly attachment, be brought into outward conformity with the Church. Once bring her within it, and the masses and prayers of the faithful will be available for her, and make up for all the deficiencies in her faith. Bring her within the pale, and our work is done. The Virgin and the saints will do the rest."

"But, my Lord," said Francisco, thoughtfully, "I fear for myself. She is very beautiful."

The Cardinal laughed. "I will absolve you from any evil consequences which may result to yourself. I am not afraid of a pair of bright eyes for you; but if it will ease your mind of any doubt or scruple, you shall act under my commands. By your vow of obedience, I command you to do your best to win Beatrice to the faith. If you can do it without winning her heart to yourself, well and good; but, by any means, win her to the Church. Hark! there is music. Do you dance?"

"No, no, my Lord, I really could not. I should be thinking all the time of the Dance of Death."

The Cardinal shuddered, and then laughed; but it was a hollow laugh. He recollected that one of those singular caricatures represented Death dancing off with a Cardinal, and realising the idea of his own death some time or other always chilled his very heart.

No thought of a glorious eternity opened before his earth-bound vision ; but a dim recollection of torture, suffering, and death, inflicted by his command, or at his instigation, on a number of innocent beings, ever connected itself with the idea of the judgment which he well knew must follow death. But such thoughts he never encouraged. He hastily quitted Francisco and entered into lively conversation with a party of nobles who approached them, but he carefully avoided the ball-room on that evening. The association Francisco's words had conjured up was not an agreeable one.

Surrounded by some young men among whom he was a favourite, Francisco also forgot his late conversation with the Cardinal ; and it was late in the evening, or rather early in the morning, before he returned to his quarters at the archiepiscopal palace, overpowered with fatigue. Yet his latest thought that night was of Beatrice.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN the evening of the day on which the Duchess with her suite honoured the Cardinal's palace by her presence, she and some of the guests were engaged in cards, and the other games of chance which formed a principal part of the amusements of that age. Beatrice's inclination and education prevented her from joining in these games. She withdrew from the gay crowd into the deep recess formed by an oriel window, at some distance from the tables, but whence she could see the Duchess in case she should be summoned to her side. The rest of the suite were playing at cards at different tables scattered about the rooms. Beatrice was busily engaged in examining some rare prints which lay on a table in the recess, when she heard a step near her. She turned not towards the visitor. She knew it was the step she had listened for all day in vain. She bent her head over the print to conceal the colour which she felt rising in her face.

He paused at a little distance from the window. She *felt* he was looking at her. And he! His heart beat responsive to the feelings which agitated hers.

What was it which gave him such exquisite pleasure as he gazed at her? Not her beauty. He scarcely saw it. It was *herself* which fascinated him. Had the lightning flash suddenly blasted her exquisite loveliness, the thrill of delight which he experienced when he was near her would scarcely have lessened. He approached her. She could not avoid raising her head and bowing to him in acknowledgment of his salutation.

He drew nearer. "Excellent those prints are considered," said he; "but I have seen the originals in Paris, and these prints give little idea of their rare excellence and beauty."

"Yet these appear to me truly beautiful," she replied.

There was one print representing the crucifixion of our Lord and the Virgin Mother standing near the cross. Perfect calmness sat upon every feature of the dying Saviour. It was as if he were saying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit—the mighty work is done—I come to Thee." The countenance of the Holy Mother expressed the deepest anguish, as if a sword indeed had pierced her inmost soul.

"How refreshing," said Francisco, glancing at the gaming-table, "to turn from such a scene as this, to gaze for a few moments on Calvary."

Beatrice looked up with astonishment and delight.

A tear glistened in her eye. Such words reminded her of earlier and happier days.

He perceived her emotion, and readily divined the cause.

"We may carry a heart alive to eternal things, even in the atmosphere of a court," said he, gently. "There was an Obadiah in Ahab's court, a Nehemiah in that of Artaxerxes."

"But it is very difficult," said Beatrice, scarcely able to control her emotion.

"If the love of that Saviour be fixed in the heart, it is possible," said Francisco.

He stood quietly by her side for some moments to give her time to recover herself.

"This picture affects me strongly," he said. "It is strange how little we dwell on that work of love. I find this emblem, which I bear about me continually, reminds me best of what I should be too apt to forget in the hurry of life;" and he drew a small crucifix of exquisitely cut ivory from his vest.

Francisco shewed it, and shewn by his hand, she shrunk not from an emblem which, shewn by another, she would have turned from as idolatrous. He spoke to thoughts which he knew would rise.

"Not the emblem," said he, "does the true Christian worship, but gratefully he makes use of any means which may serve to bring his Saviour to his mind, amid the hurrying scenes of this work-a-day

world. The emblem is little. He who died upon the cross is indeed all to the believer."

"All?" said Beatrice, looking up with again heightened colour.

"All," replied he, mildly, "to the true believer. What can we require more?"

"The Virgin and the saints, the Romish Church adore," said Beatrice, with a kindling look of indignation.

He smiled gently. She met the gaze of his expressive eyes, and her own fell again.

"Ah! madam, is it not better to believe too much than too little?" said he, with a voice whose deep soft tones spoke to her very soul. "Am I likely to love the Son less, because, for his dear sake, I reverence his holy mother also? I love her as I must love any woman of such beauty of character and holiness of life; but she is not my Saviour. They wrong us who say we worship her with such worship as we pay to her Son. But to return to the prints. Does it not seem to draw your thoughts heavenward to look on that countenance of the dying Saviour?"

"It does, indeed. I would I could keep him ever in my heart!" replied Beatrice, with her eyes again fixed on the print.

"Pardon me, lady," said Francisco, drawing nearer to her, and speaking in a low voice; "I have seen you but seldom—but those times are never to be for-

gotten. I feel that your thoughts dwell on higher things than those that occupy the mass of kindly, but frivolous beings, who surround you. To me also these higher objects are alone worthy of a thought, though circumstances force me to mingle in the gay throngs of the capital. I have found this little emblem aid me when beset by worldly business, and tempted to forget Him whom I love. Would you, lady, would you condescend to try its virtues?"

He gently placed the little crucifix beside her. Her first impulse was to refuse; but she met his eyes again. She could not resist the tender pleading which they expressed. She coloured deeply, and drew it towards her.

He spoke no word of thanks; but his countenance expressed the deepest gratitude to her for consenting to his wish.

"May He who died on the cross bless thee!" he murmured; and as he retired from her, "Holy Mother, I thank thee!" was his mental ejaculation.

She reached her own apartment in a tumult of contending feelings. Such words from a gay cavalier in that court were indeed astonishing. They aroused up thoughts which, alas! had become less and less her *own* since Marie had left her. She knelt by her bedside, but not with the crucifix in her hand. She strove to think, but there was a tumultuous joy throbbing in every vein, which forbade quiet thought.

"He thinks of me, he cares for me; I feel he does. He is a Romanist, yet were his words such as my own mother might have said to me." She lay down to rest that night, and many succeeding ones, with his precious gift closely locked in her grasp; and by day it was always carried about her person.

"Madam," said the Cardinal, aside to the Duchess, one evening a few days after the fête, "we are making progress with your heretic."

"How? What mean you?" said she.

"I have a powerful ally in Don Francisco. She has accepted from him a crucifix, and has lent him her Bible in return."

"My Lord, you are indeed invincible," said the Duchess, joyfully. "What heartfelt joy it will give me if that sweet child is gathered into the fold! But," added she, doubtfully, "you have chosen an uncommon advocate, that gay cavalier who is . . . " and she hesitated.

"Who is a most faithful Catholic," replied the Cardinal.

"But a dangerous friend," said the Duchess, "for my ward."

"Madam, I honour your prudence," replied the Cardinal; "but believe me, I know my weapons. You need fear no marriage her father would disprove. Trust me."

"Implicitly, unreservedly, my Lord ; but is she in no danger ?" asked the Duchess.

"Madam, will you aid me in this work ? I pledge myself that the Lady Beatrice will be brought into the true Church if I can depend on your Grace's assistance," said the Cardinal.

"You may depend on any help I can give ; only direct me," replied the Duchess.

"Then I must beg your Grace to permit Don Francisco free access to your circle," said the Cardinal. "By the by, your Grace's secretary is disabled just now—could you accept Don Francisco as his substitute for a few weeks ?"

"On your recommendation, it may be arranged," said the Duchess, thoughtfully.

"Then I must request your Grace to shield the Lady Beatrice as much from remark as possible. She is of so retiring a nature that a word of raillery from her companions might ruin all. If you will condescend to converse frequently with the young man yourself, he will be your Grace's most devoted servant, and yet find sufficient opportunities, when unobserved, to communicate with Lady Beatrice."

"I understand," said the Duchess, smiling. "He is to be my cavalier in the eyes of the Court, and will play his part accordingly."

"Precisely," replied the Cardinal ; "and I recommend you, also, to keep Lady Beatrice as much

employed as possible. Lonely hours in her own apartment are the worst things for her. Let her be amused as much as possible, and drawn out of herself. Mademoiselle Susette, *la belle* Julie, and others, may aid you in this. Confide to them your hopes of her conversion, and secure their active co-operation."

"And active it will be, for they all love Beatrice."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE consequences of the Cardinal's advice were exactly what he foresaw they would be. Within a few weeks all Turin was talking of the Duchess's new and handsome favourite. The report was conveyed to the Duke, who was but seldom found residing with his Duchess. Being an active soldier, he was constantly engaged in surveying his outposts, and in superintending the execution of his various plans for the improvement of his kingdom, where everything had fallen into wild disorder during his long and constrained absence. Not particularly correct in his own conduct, and having frequently given his Duchess too much occasion for jealousy, he raged furiously at the possibility of any incorrectness on her part. In spite of the habits of the court in which she had been nurtured, the Duchess had hitherto never given him the slightest cause of offence. Acting under the Cardinal's advice, she had never contemplated any danger to her own good name, and the first intimation of her husband's suspicions fell on her like a thunderbolt. She sent in haste for the Cardinal, and in the

deepest distress shewed him the sarcastic letter in which the Duke had just conveyed to her his congratulations on the late accession to her household.

The Cardinal acted his part, as usual, to admiration. He feigned the deepest astonishment and regret. He walked up and down the room in the greatest apparent agitation. He had committed a grievous blunder; his zeal for Lady Beatrice's conversion had made him blind to all other considerations. How could he remedy the mischief he had caused? He should never forgive himself. Could her Grace ever forgive him? Her Grace was only too ready to forgive, too shocked at the idea of the Cardinal's asking her forgiveness.

"My Lord," said she, "your motives were the highest. I can only thank you with my whole heart for your anxiety for Beatrice. The error is my own; you are not to blame. I only sent to entreat your assistance in the matter, now that it has taken a turn so different from our expectations."

"As far as Beatrice is concerned, the progress is most satisfactory," said the Cardinal; "but that your Grace should suffer, and by my counsel, it grieves—it distresses me beyond measure;" and his voice expressed the deepest annoyance and sympathy. "You must be extricated at any sacrifice, and that instantly," said he. "I must go to the Duke, and Francisco must be sent from court."

"And Beatrice?" asked the Duchess.

"Ah, Beatrice must not weigh in the scale with your Grace's happiness."

"But, my Lord, can no plan be suggested to keep him? I cannot give up the hope of her conversion. It depends on him."

"It does, it does," said the Cardinal; "but your Grace's noble forgetfulness of self in this matter makes me only the more anxious to remove any ground of scandal."

Thus he worked her up to entreating that, if possible, Francisco should remain. He resisted only long enough to excite her importunity to the utmost, and then said, "There is but one way to extricate you, and yet secure her conversion. Francisco must announce his attachment to Beatrice. I will explain to the Duke my part in the affair; but words only will not do, we must have public proof of their mutual regard. Your Grace must be exonerated from all shadow of blame in the affair. Beatrice's heresy is well known, and it must now be made known that that heresy alone prevented Francisco's declaring himself her suitor long since."

"But if he becomes her suitor, her father must be informed," said the Duchess; "and then, unless Beatrice's love for Francisco is stronger than her attachment to her religion, she will leave court."

"Madam," replied the Cardinal, "she will leave

court, and be lost to Rome altogether, if her father hears of Francisco's suit. His other daughter will take fright, and withdraw Beatrice at once from his saving influence."

"But what then? I cannot suffer her to marry without her father's knowledge," said the Duchess, decidedly.

"Don Francisco would not marry a heretic," said the Cardinal.

"I am well aware of that; but only give Beatrice time, and I suspect that her love for him will make her forego her early prejudices for his sake."

"My hope, I confess, rests on this foundation," said the Cardinal.

"Then her father must be informed," persisted the Duchess.

"And Beatrice lost," said the Cardinal.

The countenance of the Duchess fell.

"Do you indeed desire for Beatrice the gift of conversion and eternal safety above all earthly happiness?" asked the Cardinal.

"I do indeed," replied the Duchess. "Earthly joys quickly fade. Eternal safety is worth any sacrifice of earthly bliss."

"You think she loves Francisco, and for his sake may be induced to join the Church?" again inquired the Cardinal.

"I do," replied the Duchess.

"Then your mind may rest as regards your duty to her father. Francisco cannot marry. He is a priest of the order of Jesus," said the Cardinal.

"My Lord!" said the Duchess, astonished.

"It is true;" and the Cardinal then related to the amazed hearer the circumstances which had brought Francisco to Turin—his accidental meeting with, and the service he had rendered Beatrice—the interest he had seen excited in her mind, and the use he had resolved to make of this interest.

"Of course," he said, "he had only hoped to work on her through her feelings, but now that the Duchess's character was at stake, a different course must be taken. If Francisco were to remain, and Beatrice to be converted, the public, whose scandalous tongues had been at work, must *see* where Francisco's real interest lay. His sudden removal now would indeed only raise the suspicions of the populace to absolute certainty. The plot must be continued to the end, and the Duke at once informed of the whole."

"But Beatrice, you mean, must be kept still in ignorance of Don Francisco's real position?" said the Duchess.

"Assuredly, or the work will not be accomplished."

"But you would not suffer her to become engaged to Don Francisco?" pleaded the Duchess.

"Undoubtedly, if by that means I can save her soul," answered the Cardinal. "But I will leave your Grace to consider the plan. I can see no other means of satisfying the Duke as to your Grace's conduct—no other means of winning Beatrice to the true faith—and is not the safety of a soul worth any sacrifice? Beatrice may suffer a little here, but what is that to eternal suffering? The child will one day thank your Grace with her whole heart, for what now seems to you an undesirable subterfuge. The end sanctifies the means. Consider the end you have in view."

The wily Cardinal managed to quicken the Duchess's deliberations by hints and letters from various quarters, which she well knew pointed to Francisco as one who had already, in public estimation, pulled her down from the high pinnacle of matrimonial perfection on which she had long stood ; and she could not but desire to be fully cleared in the eyes of the public. The consideration of Beatrice's eternal safety, the Cardinal took care, should have full weight, and at length, though with many misgivings, she gave in her adhesion to his plan.

He instantly hastened off to the Duke, and put him in possession of all the particulars of the case.

The Duke, who had little faith in either women or priests, required that Francisco's attachment to the Duchess's maid of honour should be instantly de-

clared, and the Cardinal's next business was to bring Francisco's mind into unison with his own on the subject.

He had less difficulty than he expected. The unfortunate young man felt himself inextricably involved. He had acted a lie so long, that he had entirely ceased to feel himself a liar. He was also deeply interested in Beatrice's conversion. His pride urged him to desire that the undertaking should not fail. And was there no other feeling which induced him to linger still around Beatrice, which made him feel that to breathe the same air she breathed was a happiness too great to be willingly relinquished? Of the future he dared not think—the delight of the present was enough.

The Duchess undertook to plead Francisco's cause—she was the first to speak to Beatrice of his ardent devotion to her. Perhaps on this point she was not far from the truth.

A whisper opened the eyes of the courtiers to a truth of which each remembered sufficient confirmation when once it was revealed to them.

But her heresy?

"Hush! The Cardinal has absolved the young cavalier for his attachment; but marriage will not be allowed unless she returns to the true Church."

"Will she stand out?"

No one believed she would.

The Duchess's affection and caresses, the Cardinal's blandishments, the few truthful and deeply-anguished words, in which Francisco lamented the impassable barrier which separated them, made her desire, with the intensity of a woman's heart, given, with all the depths of a first love, to the man who professed to be devoted to her, that she could remove this barrier.

This only barrier, they led her to believe, was her own adhesion to the Reformed Faith.

One conversation after another was held with the Cardinal. The first twelve points of Pope Pius's creed, which are founded on the imperishable Word of God, were strenuously insisted on—the twelve which differ as clearly from that same Word, were glossed over, or passed by as unimportant.

"We have in our Church all the truths which you possess in yours," was one of the arguments used by the Cardinal. "Age and experience may have added a few unimportant doctrines to our creed, but these are chiefly intended, not for the well-instructed like yourself, but for the weak-minded and ignorant. Such must be acted on by means which may appear childish to the clever and well-informed, but for ages they have helped to keep the uninstructed mass in union with the Church. For you, my daughter, the Word of God is open. You shall have my full sanction to read it, if you place yourself under my in-

struction. But you are well aware that what is food for one, may be poison for another. Babies must be fed with milk. Wine and strong drink are for the advanced in age. The Word of God is for the advanced in mind. We only give it not to those who would abuse it."

Why had not Francisco returned her Bible? thought Beatrice. Had not his eyes often told her that he loved it for her sake: that he retained it to remind him constantly of her, as she retained his crucifix to remind her of him.

Oh, wilful, wilful blindness! A Romish priest will allow no one to read the Bible, unless he is fully convinced that the reader will understand it only as he chooses to explain it to him.

On another occasion, the Cardinal more than hinted at a Papal dispensation, should Beatrice join the Church, for all those things which she could not believe.

"We meet *all difficulties*," said the Cardinal. "The communion in both kinds, and the marriage of priests, have been granted at certain times by Papal dispensation in certain parts of Christendom. I can secure for you a Papal dispensation respecting the worship of the Virgin and the Saints. These are non-essentials in religion."

But it was to Francisco that she at last yielded; and his ears first heard the glad words, "I will join

your Church!" He was sitting by her side in the gardens of the Ducal palace.

"God be praised!" was his exclamation. He drew near to her—he placed his arm around her, and drew her close to his side. She rested her head on his shoulder—He imprinted one passionate kiss on her forehead.

The perfect joy of that moment to her!—the unutterable anguish to him! With a half-suppressed groan he shrunk from her, and darted away with the speed of an arrow.

She scarcely marvelled. She supposed his joy too deep for control. Her own cup was full: she was his. No backward glance she threw—she looked not forward: the bliss of the present moment satisfied and filled her.

The news spread among the courtiers. Caressed, flattered by all, not a moment's time for thought was allowed to Beatrice.

"All praise to the saints!" said the Cardinal, as, full of excitement, Francisco repeated the words of Beatrice. "You have well done, my son—your reward will be great. Courage! courage! my friend; you will not faint before a woman's tears. We will have a glorious bridal," continued he. "It will be a higher bridal than your fair lady dreams of!"

Francisco could bear no jesting. In an instant the Cardinal changed his cue.

“To the chapel, Francisco; spend a night in fasting and prayer—praise for the past, hope for the future. You sacrifice more to the Church now, than you did when you first joined our order. God will accept the sacrifice! *Beatrice saved* will love you with a deeper and more enduring love than she feels for you now. Commend her to the Holy Virgin and the Saints. Go, my son; I honour and reverence you. You are a worthy disciple of the Order of Jesus!”

CHAPTER XVIII.

BUT few days were allowed ; Beatrice was given to understand that her bridal would be nobly graced.

" You will be spared everything that would try you, my child. The Cardinal will receive you into Christian fellowship in the chapel," said the Duchess, on the day after her resolution had been declared to Francisco. " He will make the reception as short as possible. A few words repeated after him, and all will be done. Then Francisco may claim his beautiful bride."

Beatrice almost threw herself into the Duchess's arms, and covered her hands with kisses.

" My child, my child," she whispered in an altered voice ; and when Beatrice looked up, the Duchess's eyes were filled with tears, as she pressed her lovingly to her bosom. " Go, dearest, I can say no more now," and Beatrice wonderingly retired.

" Oh, Beatrice," said Susetta, " such beautiful dresses the Duchess has ordered. The poor women are in despair, they are commanded to get them ready

in such a hurry. We are all to have new dresses for the wedding ; but yours, oh it will be lovely ! but I am not to tell you anything about it. You will not see it even till the day. Let me see—Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, four days, and then Tuesday will be here.”

“ And, Beatrice,” said Julia, “ there is a concert to-morrow, and a whole day at Rivoli on Saturday, and I don’t know what on Sunday. On Monday night a ball, with the gardens illuminated until the moon rises.”

“ I am afraid people won’t make half such a fuss at my wedding,” said Susetta, laughing ; “ but then I am not nearly so pretty as you are, you beautiful creature,” and the two girls half smothered her with their caresses.

Francisco scarcely saw Beatrice again till the evening of the ball. He was then compelled to attend. He looked pale and anxious, but men often look thus on the eve of their wedding day.

Beatrice danced not on that night. He found himself drawn by an irresistible influence to her side.

One walk with her in the garden he could not deny himself—one short hour to *believe* she was his. He gave himself up to the full enjoyment of that hour.

Even Beatrice’s love was satisfied with his deep expressions of attachment.

But the summons came, and Beatrice must attend her mistress for the last time to her apartments.

Francisco conducted her back to the ball-room, and pressed her hand as she entered it, for the *last* time. His whole soul was in that pressure.

The Cardinal had observed the flush of excitement on the usually pale cheek of Don Francisco, and when the Duchess and her suite had retired, he was on the watch to prevent his departure alone. The young man was standing near a pillar, with his eyes steadily fixed on the door through which he had seen Beatrice disappear, as she followed the Duchess from the ball-room. His arms were folded, and he stood as one stupified. The Cardinal touched his arm. "Come," he said. "The rooms will soon be deserted. I have sent away my servants. We will walk through the palace-gardens home."

Francisco started, and mechanically followed him. As they stepped into the cool evening air, the Cardinal put his arm within that of the young man, and said, in his clear, low voice—

"Well has the work proceeded. To-morrow one of the fairest flowers that ever bloomed on earth will be transplanted into the garden of the Holy Mother of God."

Francisco shivered.

"To you, my son, is due the glory of this conversion. The work is not ours. You have succeeded in convincing her."

They were advancing slowly in the full moonlight. They passed through the walks which Francisco had so lately traversed with Beatrice leaning on his arm. He had felt her breath upon his cheek. More than once, for some moments together, his arm had encircled her. She had looked up into his face with such trusting love, such perfect confidence—his inmost soul had shrunk from the vast deceit he was perpetrating. Yet even the momentary glimpse of the abyss into which he was sinking had passed again under the present overwhelming sense of love—earthly love—to the pure and lovely being whose whole affections he felt were fixed on him. He had striven to prolong the exquisite sensation of happiness which the knowledge of her love gave him; and now the return to the intense blank of his real existence was almost insupportable. He scarcely heard the words which the Cardinal poured into his ear.

“You do not reply, my son,” said he at length.

“Your pardon, father,” stammered out Francisco.

His last words had been spoken to *her*!

Did the cold hard man, who had such wondrous power over the souls of all around him, catch a glimpse of what was passing in his victim’s mind?

“My son, you have fought the fight well. The Church thanks you for your faithful efforts. You must fight yet a little longer. It is a hard struggle;

I feel for you. I was once young myself. I know the power of women over the spirit."

"You, father!" said Francisco, startled into immediate attention by such an announcement. "You, father! Could you ever have had a thought besides the Church!"

The Cardinal smiled. "I am old now, but remember, I was once as young as you are. There were those who said I possessed external advantages—pass them by—women love not for beauty alone. There was one—but it avails nought to speak of these things now. I sacrificed my strong earthly feelings at a higher shrine, and devoted the heart which was well nigh crushed by an earthly attachment, to the Church's service, and . . . I have never regretted it."

"But she, father, how bare she the loss?"

The Cardinal laughed slightly. "They are not like us. Beautiful they often *are*, devotedly attached they often *seem*,—ready to die if disappointed. 'Tis but for a while; they love again. I had wasted many sad and bitter thoughts on her when I met her one day in all her wedding braveries. She was leaning on her husband's arm, as she had leaned on mine, and all her soul was gazing into his eyes. Pretty toys they are—no heart-breaking there! Do not fear, my son. But enough of this. It is only for you I speak of such things. Remember," said the Cardinal, smiling, and putting his finger on his lips, "no word of this to any one. Others must think of me

as always old." They had reached the palace of the Cardinal. "Now *buona notte* ; go sleep, and come to me ere the bell rings for matins."

A new current was given to Francisco's thoughts. Grateful and astonished that the man so feared, and so high above ordinary mortals, should speak to him of his own early life—that the Cardinal could ever have loved, and speak to him of his love—the powerful hold was again upon the young man's mind—again he rejoiced in the success of the plan for Beatrice's conversion ; and as he bowed at his evening devotions, again he praised the God and Father of truth for the success of his acted lie. Strange infatuation ! but stranger things have happened when once the conscience and the judgment have been given up to the power of another. The Indian fakirs, to propitiate their gods, will render a limb stiff and useless by abstaining from using it, and keeping it fixed in one position. So the powers of the mind, habitually bowed to the mind of another, lose their independence, and become positively useless to their proper owner.

But it was long before he slept, and when sleep fell on him at last, he saw again and again that sweet face close to his own, and felt her breathe upon his cheek, but when he held out his arms to clasp her to his breast, he woke to find himself in his lonely room, with the moonbeams shining on the image of the Virgin which stood on the little altar in his oratory.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE morning broke, and the sun had arisen and had gone some way on its course before Beatrice awoke. When she did awake, it was to a sense of exquisite happiness. This day she was to be united to the object of her soul's clinging idolatry. This object alone possessed her heart. No memory of her mother, no thought of her sister, crossed her mind. The whole current of her feelings set in one direction to the exclusion of every other object. Her last thoughts the preceding night had been of Francisco, and of their conversation in the garden; her first waking thought was of him: a few hours, and he would be hers. The previous ceremony was as nothing to her. A few words to be spoken to remove the only barrier which kept her from her beloved. She did not pray that morning. Did she feel it a mockery to kneel to the God whom she was wilfully forsaking for an earthly object? Her Bible Francisco had retained. In pursuance of the well-devised plan of the Cardinal, her young companions had taken care to leave her as little as

possible alone ; and from the earliest morning hour to the last moment before she closed her eyes, she had been liable to the visits of one or more, who all desired to share in the glory of her conversion. This morning the bright face of Julia Medici appeared at the side of her bed almost as soon as she awoke to consciousness.

" I wondered when you would wake, Beatrice. I have looked at you many times, but would not disturb you, you looked so happy in your sleep; but you must rise quickly now, the day advances, and how many will be looking for our bride ! "

" Oh, Beatrice," said the fair little Susetta Bernotti. " We are excused from all attendance this morning till the hour when we meet in the chapel—but see what the Duchess has sent."

Two or three waiting-maids appeared, bearing a variety of presents from the Duchess, who, in pursuance of her promises to Beatrice, had provided all that was needful for the decoration of her person on this festive occasion. A robe of white satin, trimmed with deep lace, and looped up with pearls, formed a dress which fully justified the taste of the giver. A wreath of orange blossoms was prepared for her head. Pearls and diamonds, of great value, were interwoven amid the blossoms, and a deep veil of lace completed the costume. Refreshments were brought in by the attendants, and they insisted that Beatrice should eat

before she left her bed, while they all remained to assist her toilet. While they were still employed in dressing her, another messenger arrived from the Duchess, desiring that the party should appear in the chapel one hour earlier than had been previously agreed, as the Cardinal had pressing and unexpected business at the later hour. All this was but part of the previously arranged plan to prevent Beatrice from spending any time in the solitude of her own chamber. The toilet was hastened amid the ceaseless cheerfulness and lively remarks of her attendants; and beautiful indeed Beatrice appeared when it was completed. The veil, floating around her slight figure, formed a graceful and suitable covering, but did not hide her face.

The brilliant colour with which excitement clothed her cheeks increased the effect of the soft expression of her deep blue eyes, which were frequently covered with the long eyelashes which almost swept the cheeks. The white blossoms, sparkling with the admixture of pearls and diamonds, contrasted well in colour with the soft brown hair, which was braided from the forehead, and then fell in long ringlets over her shoulders—a style of hair-dressing peculiar to herself, but which the Duchess would never allow her to alter.

The toilet was scarcely completed when the door opened, and the Duchess herself appeared. She came hurriedly forward and kissed Beatrice's cheeks.

"You have done well," she said to the attendants; "she is a lovely bride. I have come to conduct you myself," she added, "to the chapel. Every one awaits us there. You have but to bow before the Cardinal, and repeat the words he will dictate to you. It will soon be over—and then. . . ."

Beatrice pressed the arm that so kindly supported hers, and found herself, she scarcely knew how, passing through the Duchess's private entrance into the beautiful chapel of the palace.

Her heart beat with almost audible rapidity, and the blood flowing with accelerated velocity lighted up her cheek with the most brilliant colouring. The change from the full sunlight, which filled the private sitting-rooms, to the subdued light of the chapel, whose richly painted windows scarcely admitted his rays, prevented Beatrice from at first distinguishing the numbers with which it was filled. Yet the solemn quiet and sudden gloom gave a sort of chill to her excited feelings, and she stopped short as she entered. A whispered murmur of admiration arose among the spectators at the vision of youthful beauty which presented itself. The tall and commanding form of the Duchess contrasted well with the small, though exquisitely proportioned, figure of the bride. The Duchess was robed in purple satin, the close-fitting boddice shewing every movement of her graceful and dignified figure. The boddice was open in front to the

waist, and displayed beneath, a brodered chemisette of snowy whiteness, fastened round her small and perfectly formed throat with a string of diamonds, with a cross of the same costly stones attached to it in front. The hair, drawn back from the face, was covered with a small coiffure of velvet, surrounded by a coronet, of which every point was a pearl, with a large aigrette of pearls and diamonds as a centre. She bent encouragingly towards Beatrice, as she felt the small hand tremble as it rested on her arm. "Courage, my child, it will soon be over!" They passed quickly between the ranks of admiring courtiers, who fell back, right and left, from the crimson-velvet carpet which covered the floor from the private entrance to the high altar, near the foot of which, in a chair of state, sat the Cardinal, in full canonicals, surrounded by priests. The organ gave forth a low and solemn strain, and Beatrice stood before the Cardinal. The Duchess still remained close to her; for Beatrice seemed scarcely able to support herself. She stood, with her slight figure nearly covered with her wedding-veil, her head gently drooping, and, to the eyes of the devoted Romanists around her, seemed like a sweet and lovely lily about to be transplanted into the garden of the Virgin Mother. Above the high altar hung one of those beautiful paintings, in which Romanists delight to represent Mary, under the loveliest and most benignant of earthly forms; and her

soft and gentle face seemed to smile a welcome on the child whom she longed to clasp to her maternal bosom.

One upward look Beatrice gave, and she saw the fair face beaming upon her. What thought made her start and shudder, and seem to draw back from the very footstool of the Cardinal? She saw a figure standing above her, and she heard a voice again utter the words—"Swear, my daughter, swear, by all you hold sacred" Her mother's voice sounded in her ears. Was there not yet time? One more look—but not on the Madonna. Intently gazing on her was another face, pale, and yet with a fixed and determined expression. She saw Francisco. All other thoughts were swept from her mind. To be his—to be his—these words must be spoken, and a vague feeling of time for future repentance dimly floated through her brain; and she knelt at the feet of the Cardinal, replied in words of assent to his few questions, the meaning of which she scarcely understood, and rose from her knees a member of the Romish Church. The organ broke into a triumphant melody. The Cardinal ascended the steps of the altar, followed by two officiating priests. High mass was celebrated; and Beatrice, still standing near the Duchess, knelt when she knelt, stood when she stood, and bowed when she bowed; yea, bowed low to the ground when the bread, which had been blessed by the Cardinal, and converted by his word into the real body of our

Lord, was elevated for the adoration of the believing crowd. Oh mother, mother, could saints weep in bliss, many tears would that sad sight have drawn from thy loving eyes. Yes; thy child, thy darling Beatrice, was a worshipper of the consecrated wafer. But no eyes wept in that beautiful chapel. One feeling of joy pervaded the assembly—that the fair and gentle heretic had at last been gathered into the fold. And what meaning had the whole scene to Beatrice? One thought filled her whole soul—Francisco—her real idol—the object which occupied her whole heart. She would soon hear his voice claim her as his bride. She would leave that chapel, not on the Duchess's arm, but clinging to the support which would be her stay and comfort through life—the arm of her husband. The service closed. The Duchess pressed her lips to the forehead of the neophyte, and hailed her as a sister. The noble assembly pressed around to tender their congratulations, and all was for a few moments noise and confusion. The Cardinal's voice was heard, and the throng fell back, and silence was again restored. Beatrice's bridesmaids and the Duchess stood around her, and she waited to see Francisco take his place at her side, and for the commencement of the ceremony which was to unite her to him. He was leaning against a pillar at a little distance, and yet he advanced not. His face was deadly pale, and his compressed lip spoke of an internal

struggle. Fearful, indeed, was the conflict in his naturally loving heart. Every natural feeling of love, of honour, of truth, and of justice, revolted at the part he was compelled to play in this exciting scene; but the iron hand was on his spirit. He had sold himself to a Church which claims undisputed sway over the bodies, souls, and spirits of her votaries, and implicit obedience to the commands of spiritual superiors. The more revolting to the light which God has placed in each heart as a guide to the steps, the more meritorious the enforced obedience. The hour was come, and he was nerved for the terrible ordeal.

The Cardinal's voice broke the stillness which had succeeded the buzz of voices.

"Lady Beatrice, with joy have I received you into the bosom of the only true Church. No earthly motive, I would fain believe, has influenced your pure mind to take the step which can alone lead to peace and safety."

Beatrice looked up astonished. Well he knew the earthly motive which himself had fostered, and which had alone influenced her.

He looked towards Francisco. "Advance, my son." As if his limbs could not fulfil their office, but as if they acted, as indeed they did, from an effort of mind forcing them forward, Francisco advanced a few steps. "Nearer," added the Cardinal. No! Nearer he could not come—nearer to that trusting

being who, to his excited imagination, was now, since her admission into the Church of Rome, robed with superhuman beauty and sanctity—nearer he could not come. The Cardinal saw the struggle and desisted.

“My son, your gentle instructions and wise counsels have aided in this good and holy work. We thank you for your share in it; and our daughter will thank you too when she fully realises the bliss which will be hers.”

Thank him! Did not every pulse of her frame thank him—not for his Church, but for his love?

“Your work here is done; may you be as successful elsewhere, and have the unspeakable privilege of recalling many wanderers to the fold. But it is time our friends became more fully acquainted with your merit.” He raised his voice, and every member of the assembled court heard distinctly each word that followed. “When our noble cathedral at Strasburg was assailed by a licentious and ignorant rabble, intent on robbing its treasures, scattering its holy relics, and overturning the altars of the Holy Mother, heard ye not of a young and noble monk who threw himself into the building, and, by the force of his mighty eloquence alone, charmed the mind of the raging multitude, and turned them from their blasphemous purpose? And after having saved that noble cathedral from ruin, heard ye not of the same monk, who, armed with the power of truth alone, travelled among

the mountains of Switzerland in search of those who had wandered from the right way, and, as with the tongue and power of an apostle, re-converted hundreds to the true faith?"

Several voices replied—"We have all heard of the great and noble monk, Antony of Strasburg."

"You have heard of him; now your eyes see him. This man, whom you have known for a while as the Chevalier Don Francisco of Compostello, is the monk Antony of Strasburg."

An attendant, at a sign from the Cardinal, removed the borrowed flowing curls which, in accordance with the fashion received from the French court, adorned the heads of all the gallant cavaliers of that period, and displayed to view the shaven and tonsured head of a monk.

The hum of universal admiration and delight, which was rising from every corner of the chapel at the announcement of the presence of this distinguished champion of the Church of Rome, was interrupted by a sound so shrill, so piercing, so agonizing, that it seemed to awaken sympathy in every heart. It arose from the inmost soul of the unfortunate Beatrice. Her whole attention absorbed by her lover, astonished at his constrained and altered appearance, she had scarcely attended to the words of the Cardinal, till she heard the word "monk" and saw the covering removed from the head of her affianced husband, and there beheld

the tonsure mark. The truth flashed on her mind, and with this fearful cry she sank senseless on the pavement, the blood gushing from her mouth and nostrils as she fell.

The Duchess was the first who raised her head. Oh, did no feeling of compunction visit her mind as she saw the life-blood of the victim staining the white robe of her wedding mockery?

All was confusion. They raised her from the pavement, and carried her again through the Duchess's private apartments to her own room, and laid her on her bed. The court physicians were soon in attendance.

CHAPTER XX.

FRANCISCO, where was he? When Beatrice fell, his first impulse was to rush forward to her assistance, but a stern voice within spoke, "You touch her, murderer! You have no right to go near the loveliness you have blasted—the trusting heart you have broken!" O that inner voice! Would he had listened to it sooner! Now it was too late. Loud and louder it spoke, and despair was in every utterance. When he had seen Beatrice's lifeless form carried away, he rushed from the chapel. As soon as the crowd dispersed, the Cardinal sought for the young man, hoping that the adulation of the courtiers would occupy his mind, and keep him from thoughts of Beatrice, but he sought him in vain. As soon as he could disengage himself from the questions of the throng, he returned to his palace, and inquired if Don Francisco had returned. On being told that he had not been seen since he had quitted the palace in the morning, he despatched several trusty attendants in various directions, desiring them to seek Francisco, and hasten his return to the palace. He impatiently awaited his

arrival. No tidings, however, did the messengers bring, and for many hours was the Cardinal doomed to uncertainty and anxiety.

An indefinable feeling had drawn him to the youthful monk. Accustomed to obedience, and fully understanding how to govern the minds of all around him, the genuine admiration, the devoted respect, the almost affection which Francisco's whole manner shewed, had all attached him to the young monk, and he was far more perturbed by his unexpected disappearance than he cared to shew to those around him.

He sat alone in his library, and though, when any of his attendants entered the room, they found him apparently engaged with his usual extensive correspondence, the moment the door was closed, he left his seat, and walked up and down the room, eagerly listening for every footstep, and hoping that the next would be that of the only being he might almost have been said to love.

But where was Francisco? On leaving the chapel by a private door, his only desire was solitude. He dreaded to meet a familiar face. A crowd had assembled round the chapel, and filled the street leading to the Cardinal's residence, or he might have sought the privacy of his own chamber, but at the first glimpse of the thronging multitude he turned away. Fast and faster down the least frequented streets he hurried, till

he entered a path which led to some vineyards behind the city. Along this narrow and rugged path he rushed. It wound between the vineyards till it reached an extensive open tract of meadow land, dotted over with groups of trees. Across this meadow he continued his course, the hot sun beating on his head. At length he entered a grove, in whose thick recesses he hoped to be shrouded from every human eye. Human habitations he had left far behind. At length he felt alone. He threw himself on the turf beneath a large chestnut tree. Its huge leaves afforded thorough shelter from the mid-day sun. Stunned in mind, and utterly exhausted in body, he had scarcely flung himself upon the ground before he fell into a heavy sleep. Oh the dreadful awakening! the body revived and strengthened to bear the full anguish of the never sleeping soul! After an hour or two's blessed unconsciousness, he partly awoke. The sun's rays scarcely made their way among the thick foliage, yet here and there a bright gleam shone on the emerald turf, and the insects danced up and down and buzzed their happy song in the sunbeam. The voices of the birds were silent—a heavy oppression seemed to rest on the air. Francisco could scarcely breathe, and yet he dared not move to wake the stillness which he felt soothing, and to rouse himself to the full sense of the dreadful something which pressed like a heavy load upon his brain.

Suddenly he heard two women's voices near him. They were cottagers passing through the wood on their way to a village not far distant. Not aware of his presence, they were engaged in earnest conversation. A sweet young voice, half choked with tears, was saying—

“Oh, mother, I shall never forget her! that beautiful lady in her white wedding-dress! But can it be true? Did she really think he was going to marry her? Oh mother! and then to find he was a monk! How could he do it?”

An older voice replied—

“He was a brave young man, and did good service to the Church before.”

“Yes, yes, mother, but did he make her believe that he would marry her? Why did not he tell her he was a monk?”

“They say he wanted to win her to the true Church, and told her that he never would marry a heretic.”

“Then she joined the Church to marry him, and now she finds she cannot, it's enough to kill her. O mother! mother! he has murdered her sure enough. Did you see that blood staining her white veil? the poor, poor thing!”

“Hush, my child, it was to save her soul.”

The voices passed away. Murder! Ah! was it not murder? He was a murderer. He was *her*

murderer. He clenched his hands, he tore his hair, he groaned in utter agony of spirit. Why could he not fly to her? O that look as she fell! It spoke such love, and yet such utter anguish. "You have deceived me, you whom I loved and trusted." And he had deceived her—wilfully deceived her. The end was gained. She had joined the only true Church; but was he satisfied with the means? He opened his eyes, he gazed upwards into the living canopy which hung shelteringly over him. A word from the Scriptures of God darted like a lightning-flash into his mind. "I am . . . the truth." It was like a lightning-flash, not to illumine but to blast. He drew forth in haste from his vest the Bible which Beatrice had lent him, and which he had never intended to return. He hurriedly turned the leaves. Another arrow smote him. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it." "Murders and lies are the work of Satan. Am I not a worthy child of my father?" And he laughed aloud in horrible mockery of his maddening anguish. "Who urged me on?" He shook with impotent rage when he thought of the Cardinal. "Yes, there he stood with his calm cold face to-day, and uttered the words which spoke death to Beatrice. He stood with

a lie on his forehead, and I but a puppet in his hand. It was his work." And now to get away from him, as far as earth could hide him! Then came the thought of Beatrice dying—Beatrice calling on him in her death-agony. Yet what was he now in her eyes? Was he not her scorn, her detestation?—Then arose before him the calm stern face of his nurse. Her intense horror of deceit—her sharp punishment of every departure from truth—the word which she had so often uttered as a warning—"Be sure your sin will find you out." And it had found him. There he lay in full horror of his own baseness, and without a ray of light to guide him to the only *pardon-place for sin*. Penances, masses, they could not keep down the tide of earthly passion which swelled every vein, nor root out the passionate desire he felt to clasp Beatrice again—to call her his. He loathed the oaths which kept him from her—he loathed the Church whose iron fetters bound him—he loathed the Cardinal with the most intense abhorrence. The veil had fallen from his eyes. He saw the blackness of his own guilt, and he felt that the Cardinal's was ten times greater. Yet was he bound to him by oaths of obedience—bound to obey the man he abhorred—tied back for ever from the thing he loved with all the intensity of his ardent nature.

His belief in all things was gone, save his belief in his own vileness and the Cardinal's tenfold sin-

fulness. The present all misery—the future a dead blank. A liar and a murderer—the curse of Cain was on him; and no glimmer of light shone to shew him a way out of the drear abyss into which he had plunged.

Meanwhile the day passed on; and as evening approached, a heavy cloud came up from the sea, which presently covered the heavens with blackness, and a violent storm arose. The thunder rolled, and the vivid lightning-flashes darted from the clouds in every direction. "God's voice against me," murmured the wretched man. "Oh that He would strike me dead!" As the storm increased in intensity, darker and darker fell the cloud upon his spirit. Overwrought with his bodily exertion, his mental anguish, and the want of food, a temporary madness possessed him. He rose frantically from the turf on which he had lain for hours, rushed from under the shelter of the trees, which were waving wildly over his head, and whose branches were crashing and rending amid the fury of the storm. He crossed the tract of meadow land in spite of the driving wind, which almost bore him from his feet. He felt a fierce pleasure in combating the wild elements, and eagerly struggled on. He entered the narrow path he had ascended in the morning, and hurried towards the city. The wind howled around him and the rain descended in torrents. The night grew darker and darker till nothing was discernible except the lights which glimmered about

in the city. He entered the almost deserted streets, and hurried along till he reached the bridge. A few lamps shone above the arches, and shewed the deep dark river beneath, rushing impetuously onwards towards the sea. He stood still. There was a lull in the storm. The wind suddenly fell. Through a break in the dense cloud, for a moment, the bright moon glimmered. It shone upon the dark arches of the bridge, and cast a line of light across the river in its rapid, yet silent, channel below. The sudden stillness soothed not his desperation. He leaned over the bridge and gazed into the depths beneath. "There is everlasting stillness there," he muttered, in a low voice. "No murderer hath eternal life;" and he placed his hand upon the parapet.

"Stop, stop," cried a female voice; and a woman rushed forward and caught his mantle.

He turned fiercely and tore it from her hand.

The moon shone upon his face.

"Francisco, thou! For heaven's sake stop!"

It was too late. With one bound he had cleared the parapet, and there was a deep plunge. The waters parted for a moment, closed over his head, and hurried on as noiselessly as before. The cloud again covered the moon, and nothing enlightened the darkness but the few glimmering lamps, which shone at rare intervals upon the bridge, but a woman hung over the parapet in an agony of grief—

"Francisco—Oh my son! my son!"

CHAPTER XXI.

THE family of the Cardinal were retiring to rest when a knocking was heard at the outer gate.

On the porter opening the side-window to inquire the business of a visitor at such an hour, a woman's voice was heard—

“I must see the Cardinal.”

“Impossible, at this hour. His Grace cannot be disturbed. Your business, good woman?”


“I must see the Cardinal.”

The Cardinal, who was far too uneasy to think of retiring to rest, and whose quick ear caught the smallest sound, opened his door and inquired of the attendant lackeys the occasion of the disturbance.

One of them hurried to the porter, and was told that a woman desired to speak to his Highness.

“Admit her,” was the command, and the Cardinal returned to his library.

Shortly the door was opened, and the lackey ushered into the apartment a tall gaunt-looking woman, closely veiled, her garments drenched with the storm. As



soon as the lackey had admitted the visitor, he silently closed the door and withdrew.

The woman advanced with steady steps close up to the table behind which the Cardinal was seated, and then stood still.

"My daughter, what cause brings you here at this unwonted hour?"

No reply. But the Cardinal could distinguish a pair of dark eyes flashing on him through the veil. He drew himself up haughtily.

"We are not accustomed to speak unanswered."

Still no reply.

"Woman, unless you tell me your errand I must order my attendants to remove you."

"There is no need to use violence, Alfric. You cannot desire me to depart quicker than I desire to remove myself from your presence," and she raised her veil as she spoke.

The Cardinal started up, and then hid his face with his hands.

"Sister, what brings you here?"

"Be sure your sin will find you out," said she, sternly. She proceeded in an altered voice: "Alfric, we were once children together. We wept together over our young sister's grave. You were a loving brother then—you would not take the life of the meanest insect—you would step aside from the crawling worm; but now you are grown a cold and cruel man. You crush the

fondest affections of the most loving hearts—you revel in the wretchedness your short-sighted and miserable policy entails. I heard to-day that cry of anguish, and it haunts me still; and the boy Francisco”——

“What of him?” said the Cardinal, uncovering his face, and fixing on his unwelcome visitor an eye of most eager inquiry.

“Only another heart broken.”

“Where is he?”

“What matters it to you where he is? I had trained him to virtue. I loved him—oh, how I loved that boy! the only thing you had left me to love.”

“You!” said the Cardinal.

“Yes; he was brought to me a helpless infant, to fill my desolate heart. He grew under my care—he rose towards man’s estate—he shewed piety, zeal, love, talent—all, all I consecrated to the Church—the Church I love—the Church I cling to—though there is darkness and sin in her, and though unutterable abominations are committed in her name. You found him out; for no one who can serve your purposes is ever hid from your eyes. You knew not that *I* had trained him to be an honour to the Church. I taught him to love and fear God—I taught him to hate a lie—I taught him that however secretly he might sin, God would visit it some day. You found him—you influenced him, as you have ever influenced all around you. You taught him to lie, to steal, to mur-

der, to gain your own ends. You persuaded him that nothing is sin that tends to advance the interests of the Church. O vain, short-sighted policy ! It is such as you that ruin the Church—that hold it up to the reprobation of every honest and true heart in Christendom.”

The Cardinal had gradually recovered the first shock of the appearance of one whose reproofs he feared, and whom he hated with the bitter hatred which the wicked ever feel towards all whom they have injured ; and resuming his cold and haughty manner, listened with apparent unconcern, but with ill-concealed impatience, to her scornful rebukes.

“The old story again, Sybilla. I take my own way, and know my own duty to the Church of which I am an unworthy member.”

“Unworthy, indeed,” and her eye flashed with fearless scorn. “I ask *you*, where is my boy ? He came to you honourable, upright ; with the honour of *worthy deeds* done for the Church full upon him—with souls won, as souls ought to be won from the gulf of perdition—by the power of his preaching, by the admiration of his holy life ; and you have blackened his pure fame, and made him partner in one of the most atrocious plots which ever caused our Church’s enemies to cry shame upon her. You have ruined his fame—killed his body—and sent his soul to hell.”

"Killed? Pray leave these heroics, Sybilla, and speak plainly. You have repeatedly told me I have killed you; yet here you are, as full of life and energy as ever you were."

"Worse than death have you inflicted on me times without number. But I dare not do what you have driven my poor boy to do. I dare not rush uncalled into my Maker's presence."

The Cardinal started up and seized her arm, and shook it violently. "Tell me this instant, woman, plainly what you mean?"

She looked at him steadfastly, perfectly unmoved by his violence. He let fall her arm, and turned away, unable to meet that steady gaze. Deliberately and distinctly she uttered the words—

"I saw him on the bridge. I saw him throw himself into the river beneath. His upturned face glared at me for a moment, and then the waters closed over him, and he was gone."

The Cardinal sank down in his chair, and sat as one stunned. His sister stood gazing on him—a look of pity passed over her face—she remained perfectly silent. The stony look passed from his face. He uttered one deep sigh. She threw herself on her knees before him—

"Oh Alfric, Alfric, tell me—oh tell me you repent!—only tell me you grieve over the ruin you have

caused—only one word of sorrow—one word of penitence!”

“I!—I repent!” said the Cardinal, drawing himself up, and gazing at his sister with that dark and malignant expression which it is happily in the power of the Evil One to impress but rarely on the human countenance. “I have never repented but once. I repent that I loved. I repent that I ever wasted one thought on that being who loved me not; though, like a fool, I would have died for her. I repent the weeks I wasted in that fruitless toil. She refused and scorned me; and from that hour no feeling of love for mortal has ever softened this heart. I can hate—hate firmly, determinedly, unchangingly. The sight of the love and the joy of others only adds to my hatred; for why should they enjoy what never can be mine? No. Since that day when she cast me from her, my whole mind and soul have had but one bent, one determination—to make myself great, dreaded, powerful—to advance the Church’s interest—to bind others to do my will—to force them to fulfil my purposes, and to sacrifice everything that stood between me and the object I desired to attain. They told me that I should never win that girl Béatrice to the faith. Was I to be baffled by her mother’s child? Once that mother spurned me. Would she not have kneeled to me to implore me not to make her child a

Catholic?" and he laughed loudly, and in scorn. Sybilla had risen from her knees, and resumed her haughty demeanour. "It was a mercy she did not deserve, to save her child from hell. I took the only means I saw effectual to compass my end. They succeeded. She is won—she has joined the Church. I care not if she dies to-morrow. I have conquered."

"Hard, hard heart. Poor Marie's child is nothing to you. But Emmeline's son, Emmeline the loving, the deceived, the forsaken—"

He started—"The child died shortly after its birth—before the mother took the veil."

"That child did *not* die. The woman whom the *father* had paid to take its little harmless life was less cruel than he was. The little one smiled in her face, and clasped her finger with its tiny hand, and she could not kill it."

"Liar and deceiver!" said the Cardinal, starting up, "I paid her for its burial. She swore to me it had died on her knees—I will search her out. I will"—

"She is beyond your vengeance. She died last year, and it was no sorrow to her, in the prospect of meeting her Judge, that she had not done your bidding."

"But what became of the boy?"

"She brought him to me. With me, she believed he would be best hidden from you. I was crushed

and broken-hearted,—she brought me something to love. He was my life till you robbed me of him—my glory and my pride, till you made him a liar and a murderer. The man whose lifeless corpse is at this present moment floating towards the sea, without Christian burial, was Emmeline's son—and you know the father."

As she said these words she turned from the table, crossed the room, opened the door, and, without another look at the Cardinal, disappeared from the apartment,—passed the sleeping porter, and entered the dark street. Apparently insensible to fatigue, she passed quickly through the deserted city, and before morning broke, had proceeded some miles on her lonely way to her native land.

The Cardinal remained for hours sitting where she had left him. His attendant lackeys had seen the departure of the mysterious visitor, but troubled not themselves to follow her to the door. Weary of expecting a summons to their master, they had at last sunk to sleep on the floor of the ante-chamber. The light of the lamp, which stood on the table, grew dimmer and dimmer, yet the Cardinal moved not. At length morning dawned—the slumbering servants awoke, and when one of them ventured, unsummoned, into the room, he found his master sitting, with his eyes fixed, and his limbs stiffened. The alarm was raised, and the best doctors the city

afforded, summoned. He was laid on his bed, and remedies applied. At length, after profuse bleeding, his senses returned; but on the bed of weariness we will leave him, hoping that he may learn some of the lessons which illness is calculated to teach—leave him “to commune with his own heart, and *be still*.”

CHAPTER XXII.

HOUR after hour had Beatrice remained in a state of insensibility. With weeping eyes the attendants had stood and watched around her, the Duchess occasionally coming to gaze, with an anxious look, on the death-like countenance of the poor sufferer. Her presence had checked any remarks among her attendants, but when she had retired for the night to her own room, and the nurses had commenced their night-watching in the apartment of Beatrice, who still gave no token of consciousness, the long-smothered indignation of Susetta Bernotti burst forth in such a torrent as to terrify her young companions, who, however they might agree with her in secret, were fearful of uttering words which appeared almost like blasphemy in the strict court in which they resided.

After their night-attendance on their mistress, they had been dismissed as usual, and had instantly returned to gaze at Beatrice, but not being allowed by the nurses to remain with her, they had returned to their ordinary sitting-room for a few moments' unconstrained conversation previous to seeking their pillows.

Susetta, with her eyes flashing, began—

“This time last night she came into the ball-room, leaning on her lover’s arm, and I saw the smile of the Duchess as she entered. How happy did Beatrice appear—how bright—how beautiful! And now, to-night, what is she? and who has done it? Yes, who has done it, I say? I care not who hears me,” said the excited girl, as one of the other girls hastily closed the door. “Is not that man a dishonourable scoundrel, a wicked hard-hearted wretch, who could deceive and break the heart of such a girl as Beatrice?”

“Hush, hush, Susetta, it is a holy monk.”

“Tell me not such nonsense,” she continued, with kindling indignation—“Holy? He pretended to be her lover, and won her heart when he was sworn to the cloister. He promised to marry her if she would join his Church; and do any one of you sitting here suppose she would ever have left her own religion except to marry him? The Cardinal tried, the Duchess tried, we all tried; but as long as she kept that blessed book of hers, nothing that we said stirred her more than my breath would stir that strong wall. He took her blessed book—we all strove to keep her from thought or from prayer, because when she thought, and prayed, and read, she was too strong for us—but even this would not have done, had he not crept into her heart like a viper, and had she not learned to love

him. What will not a woman do for the man she loves? And when she has lost her book, her faith, her peace of mind, and joined his Church in order to become his wife, he has the barefacedness—the baseness, to shew that he is a monk! All I can say is, a religion that gains a convert by such means as these is not a religion worth having. I'll have nothing more to say to it. I'll go and seek the heretics Beatrice and Marie loved—I can find them near my father's home. Holy monk! I hate, I despise him, I spit upon him. I'd rather be a heretic a thousand times over than confess to one who acts as he acted—and I'll be one too, I will."

"Susetta," said a stern voice, at which they all started. The Duchess, supposing all her suite had retired to rest, and unable herself to sleep, from anxiety about Beatrice, had left her room to look once more on the invalid, and had heard all the passionate speech of the angry girl.

"Susetta! Silence, unhappy girl!"

Susetta, her face still glowing, and every pulse beating with passionate indignation, dared not disobey the well-known commanding voice; but her flashing eye quailed not beneath the stern and sorrowful look of her mistress.

"Susetta, learn that it becomes not you, a faithful child of Rome, to seek to understand the conduct of those holy men, who are as far above you in God's

favour and in human understanding, as you are above the infant who has just been received by baptism into the Holy Church. All that the holy monk Antony has said and done was approved and sanctioned by the Cardinal; and God has blessed his efforts by bringing the erring and lost one into the only safe fold. What matters it if her life here is shortened if she is received into Paradise above, when she departs? Remember, no heretics can enter there—the holy Virgin will not pray for those who blaspheme her; and who but she can turn away the Judge's anger? If Beatrice dies, we will pay for masses to remove her speedily from the purging fires of purgatory; and do you not think she will thank us when she wins an eternal home? I forgive your sinful words, my child—but go to your room and repeat your prayers to the Virgin to forgive you too. Let me hear no more of *heresy*, now Beatrice is reclaimed; and remember," she added, sternly, "that for such words again heard as those that fell from you just now, there are prisons and punishment not very far from hence.—Go."

The trembling ladies all separated with the deepest obeisance to their mistress, who returned with added gloom to her room. Outward obedience could Susetta give, but the hold of Rome was shaken. A gleam of light from the blessed book had been admitted. Beatrice's body had been gained to the Church, but

Susetta's spirit was emancipated from Rome, and before many years had passed, Susetta had quitted the Church of her fathers, and, guided by a blessed book of her own, was a living member of the Church of Christ.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BEATRICE woke first to consciousness early in the morning succeeding her attack. When she opened her eyes she gazed at first wildly about her. The kind nurse, who was watching her, spoke soothingly to her, gave her nourishment, but refused to allow her to speak, nor would she reply to any questions. Slowly the memory of the scene in the chapel dawned upon her, and tears, such as few have cause to shed, poured from her eyes. Her weak frame could not long bear the unspeakable anguish which that remembrance caused, and she soon relapsed into unconsciousness. For several days the same scenes were repeated. Alternate periods of consciousness and unconsciousness rapidly succeeded each other, till the attendants feared her frame must sink exhausted. Her youth and excellent constitution triumphed at last; and she returned to the full and unchanging knowledge of her situation. She shrunk from all her attendants, and replied but by monosyllables to all who addressed her, though her looks often thanked them for their unwearied attention. Whenever the Duchess entered the room, her coun-

tenance shewed but too plainly her feeling of utter shrinking and almost abhorrence. She exerted herself to reply to her inquiries, but perceptibly shuddered if she touched her cheek or hand.

"How do you feel to-day, Beatrice?"

"Better, I thank your Grace."

"My poor child, you have suffered much."

No reply.

"How does she sleep, nurse?"

"But badly, madam. She starts and groans if she sleeps, and lies awake more than half the night."

"Keep her as quiet as possible."

"Yes, madam."

This was the sort of conversation that passed day after day in the sick-chamber. The young ladies, Beatrice's companions, were strictly forbidden to enter her room, and she shewed no desire for their company. Hour after hour she lay in moody meditation. Too weak for horror or despair, she simply felt utterly, hopelessly wretched. When her thoughts reverted to Francisco, her feelings of indignation entirely overpowered her former intense doting fondness.

His heartless deceit, his cruel lie, so entirely blackened his character in her mind, that she wholly ceased to respect him; and in a mind constituted like hers, *love* passed away the moment respect ceased. Her idol stood before her, robbed of all the perfec-

tions with which she had clothed him. A liar! how her soul shuddered at the thoughts of the love she had expended on him. And yet, when the remembrance of his beaming countenance, his tender words, his affectionate looks came over her, she groaned in bitterness of spirit, and felt softened towards him in spite of herself. The love thus thrown back upon her seemed to turn to gall. She, the lovely, the loving, and the loved, felt a loathing and hatred of all around her. One after another, as they rose before her mind—Julia, Susetta—all, all, alike were deceivers. She supposed they had all been in the secret. Then the Cardinal and the Duchess! words could not express her hatred of them. Tempest-tossed, and with her religious feelings and principles deadened, she thought not upon her own sin in departing from her faith, but in proud and angry irritation on the atrocious treatment she had received. She excused her own unfaithfulness by dwelling on what she considered the far more blameable conduct of others. Often and often she longed for her sister Marie. “Oh Marie, my faithful friend! my truthful guide!” she would say to herself; and then she shrunk from the thought of that calm face looking on her, a professed Romanist. “No, no, I could not bear her eye. She would shrink from me. She would spurn me.”

Ah! little she knew of that loving heart, so humbly sensible of its own sinfulness, that it had not room

for any feeling for the follies or the sins of others but pity. Her Bible, where was it? *He* had it. Besides, when she thought of it, did not every text which rose to her mind condemn her? Her Saviour once so dear? "I have denied Him. He will not hear." Thus without earthly hope or spiritual comfort, she remained a prey to hopeless, helpless misery.

After more than a fortnight's illness the Cardinal again appeared at Court. The Duchess had anxiously desired his presence, and when he came to her, she was greatly touched at his altered appearance. Ten years seemed added to his life. His upright figure was bowed, and his hand slightly trembled as if palsied.

"My Lord, I grieve to see you thus," was the language of her heart as well as her lips.

"I thank your Grace," replied he, somewhat haughtily—"it is nought; it is nought. Change of air and scene will restore me. I think of going for a few weeks to Rome, and possibly I may extend my journey into Spain; some weighty affairs of the Church require my presence there."

"Always the Church, Father. What can I do without your advice and counsel?"

"A true daughter of the Church acquiesces in all her spiritual adviser's decisions without murmuring. I will leave Father Augustino here (a priest the Duchess

particularly disliked), and he will communicate with me."

"As you please, my Lord," replied the Duchess, haughtily, in her turn. "I do not choose to confess to Father Augustino."

There is no need to pursue this subject, or to shew by what arguments, or rather by what overbearing conduct, the Cardinal now, as on former occasions, overruled the Duchess's objections, subdued her determined will, and left her humbled in the hands of the very man whom, of all others, she detested. Father Augustino was a man of vulgar mind, boisterous and rude in manner, and grated on every feminine and refined feeling of the Duchess. But he was a clever man, and served the Cardinal's purposes; and, as usual, the Duchess submitted, and the Cardinal triumphed.

"And now, my Lord, as to Beatrice; what is to be done with her?"

The Cardinal started and shuddered. Francisco rose before his mind. He wiped the cold drops from his brow.

"Your noble cavalier—what have you done with him? He has passed from our sight as suddenly as he came before us. Where shall we hear of him next?"

The body of the wretched monk had been found, washed up among some sedge, after being borne

along for many miles by the waters of the cold river into which he had plunged. As two or three days had passed, it was not recognisable, and had been buried by the Cardinal's order as quietly as possible. He had sent confidential spies many miles along the course of the river, to examine any bodies which might be found drowned in its waters, and he had identified the remains by a token which had been brought to him—Beatrice's Bible, wrapped in the vest of the corpse. Injured and useless though it was, the Cardinal retained it, as the only relic remaining of his unfortunate son. The remains had Christian burial, and masses were said for the repose of his soul. But the Cardinal had no idea of confessing the truth to the Duchess. He sat for some time, apparently absorbed in thought; at length, rousing himself, he said—

“I beg your pardon. You asked for the monk Antony. His mission here was accomplished. He has passed to his work for the Church elsewhere. The Church gives no account of her members. We may hear of his deeds again; or he may end his days in the quiet cloister, unnoticed by any eyes save those of his brother monks. But Beatrice? How took she the discovery? I remember she fainted. A few tears, I suppose. Has she recovered her spirits?”

“She is a broken and altered being. She has never risen from her couch since. She speaks to no one,

and seems to care for no one. When I approach her she evidently shrinks from me, and only answers my inquiries when she cannot help speaking."

"Where is she? I would see her."

"You might soften her mind, and lead her to the Blessed Virgin for comfort. I will not allow her companions to be with her till I can ascertain the state of her mind."

"A truly wise precaution."

When Beatrice saw the Cardinal enter her room with the Duchess, the colour mounted to her cheeks, and her eyes glowed with indignation. The flush soon passed away, and he gazed on her pale and altered face. He had seen her last in her bridal beauty, not three weeks previously. There she lay, her hair all cut off to cool her fevered head; her eyes wild, and her face haggard and pale—a wreck. But no emotion of pity moved the heart of the man who gazed upon her. He had triumphed. She was a Romanist. But that slight and fragile form encased a spirit as dauntless as his own. She feared him not as a priest. She saw him in his true colours, as a bold, bad man, who had taken the most dishonest means to allure her into his Church. She knew his power; but death was not more terrible to her than life; and bodily torture could not equal the pain of the mental rack on which he had stretched her.

The Duchess desired the nurse to withdraw. After

placing seats near the invalid's couch, she retired, and Beatrice was alone with her visitors.

In a bland and gentle voice, the Cardinal began—"I heard of your illness, my daughter, and, as a priest of the Holy Church, to which you have now the happiness of belonging, I am come to offer you any spiritual consolation you may require."

Beatrice gazed on him without speaking. Every feature expressed the scorn she felt. His eye for a moment sunk beneath her gaze.

"Beatrice," said the Duchess, "his Eminence has condescended to honour you with a visit. He is not accustomed to speak unanswered."

Beatrice looked at her with the same expression. "What does your Grace command me to say?"

"Thank the Cardinal for his kindness."

Beatrice replied with a bitter smile, "I thank the Cardinal for the *Christian candour* and the *perfect truth* with which he has treated me since I had the honour of his acquaintance."

"Beatrice!" said the Duchess.

The long pent-up indignation of Beatrice burst forth. "My Lord, you come to gaze upon your victim. I must bear your presence, but no words can express my sense of your conduct. You have deceived and betrayed me. I am fully aware of your power. You may seize and torture my body—you may dash me to pieces among the rocks, as some of your Church

murdered my grandfather. My body is in your hands—but my mind is unfettered. From my inmost soul I loathe and abhor the Church into which you have dragged me. I look upon you as a personification of that Church. She wins converts by lies, and keeps them by violence. You have ruined my soul. I have not one ray of hope for time or for eternity, and the sooner you send me to hell the better.”

“Beatrice!” said the Duchess, perfectly electrified, “Child! child! what evil spirit possesses you? Father, heed not her words—her mind is wandering.”

“It wandered,” said Beatrice, “when I joined his Church, and from that wandering there is no return.”

The Duchess looked aghast, and seemed to tremble at the thought of what the Cardinal would say to this unexampled boldness.

But memory was busy with the Cardinal. He saw again the body of an aged pastor bounding from cliff to cliff, in its awful descent, hurled from the jutting rock, at his command. He heard an agonised voice, “My father! my father!”

Paleness again spread over his face, and he felt the same attack recurring which had lately prostrated him; but, rallying, he rose to go, and said, in a voice which struggled to be calm—

“I am accustomed to be misunderstood and calumniated. Like my Lord and Master, I answer not a

word. I forgive this unhappy girl, and will leave her ; leave her, I trust, to quiet and repentance."

"Beatrice, you hear the holy Father ; entreat his pardon ere it be too late."

"He has more need of my pardon than I have of his—I have never lied to him," returned the undaunted girl.

Casting a petrifying look upon her, the Duchess followed the Cardinal from the room, and Beatrice sunk exhausted on her pillow.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE Cardinal quitted Turin on the following day, having recommended the Duchess, by all means, to remove the unhappy Beatrice from the Court, lest she should poison the minds of her companions. A home must be found her in some convent, where means might be taken to coerce her at least into outward obedience, and the removal had better take place speedily, lest her father should hear of her conversion, and desire to receive her at home. Father Augustino would settle the rest. But Father Augustino was prosy, important, and busy, and did nothing; so one of the nurses, a mild and gentle woman, whose heart yearned over the poor girl in her utter loneliness and wretchedness, ventured to recommend a convent in which her sister lived, in the Val Moutiere. She thought that Beatrice's health would be more likely to rally among her native mountains than in the hotter air of Italy; and she had heard her sister speak of the gentleness of the abbess, who made her convent as much as possible the abode of peace and holiness.

The latter recommendation she did not name to the

Duchess, as she rather guessed it might mar her intention ; but she offered herself to conduct Beatrice to the convent, and to ensure her admittance there, till her health recovered. " And then," added the good woman, " she may be tempted to join the holy sisterhood, and there find peace for her troubled soul."

Glad to be relieved from her difficulty, public affairs claiming a larger share of her attention, now that the astute Cardinal was absent, the Duchess gladly assented to the timely proposal, and before Beatrice was strong enough to move, she was directed to prepare for a journey. The Duchess desired that she might be removed during one of her short visits to her country residence, and she never saw her again after her interview with the Cardinal.

Late on the evening of the day before the Duchess's departure for the palace at Rivoli, Julia and Susetta resolved to steal into Beatrice's room, and bid her farewell. They watched the nurse away, and hurrying into the room, threw themselves into her arms.

Startled at their sudden appearance, Beatrice warmly returned their embraces. Then suddenly remembering, and coldly withdrawing herself, asked—

" What brings you here ?"

" Oh, Beatrice! dear darling Beatrice," said Susetta, throwing her arms again around her, " you do not believe that we shared the deceit?—you may well doubt us all, I know, but there are some truth-loving

Catholics, I assure you—some who hate a lie as heartily as you do.”

“Let me look at you, Susetta,” said Beatrice; “I did feel that I could never believe one of your religion again; but look in my face and say those words again, and I will try to believe you.”

Susetta eagerly looked into her eyes, and repeated her assertion.

“I believe you, dearest,” said Beatrice.

“And believe me too,” said Julie.

Beatrice kissed them both, and the sound of the nurse’s step was the signal for their departure. They had scarcely quitted the room when she returned.

“I heard voices, lady; who has been here?”

Beatrice looked at her.

“Have you been alone since I left?”

“I never lie,” said Beatrice. “No.”

“Who has been with you?”

“I do not choose to say.”

“Ah, poor child,” said the gentle nurse, “you look on me as your gaoler.”

When desired to prepare for her journey, Beatrice made no opposition. A strong escort accompanied her, and a few days’ journey brought her to the beautiful Val Moutiere. The traveller through that most wondrous work of nature’s hand, may see to the present day the little convent, high among the hills which skirt this exquisitely lovely valley. To the

eye of romance, the spot is one to ensure peace and happiness to those privileged to dwell amidst its beauty. High above the wants and woes, the combats and divisions of lower life, there might be supposed to be nothing in such a spot to chill the soul's intercourse with the Eternal. Nothing around, but the fairest works of His almighty hand ; nothing above, but the bright blue sky, which the upturned eye seeks to pierce, as the only veil which shrouds His throne from the gaze of the true and faithful worshipper. Alas ! alas ! for romance. The little convent, with its handful of inhabitants, was its own world, and as full of elements of discord as the populous cities below. Sister Catherine was as ambitious of rule as her namesake of Medici at Paris. Sister Agnes was as much occupied with her cooking and her garments for the poor as Elizabeth of England was with her lovers and her wards. Jealousies there were amongst the sisterhood as to present trifles, and even as to earthly wishes and loves, before they joined the virgin ranks of the convent. Few had exalted views of their calling—scarcely one really lived above the outward routine of their daily ceremonials. They were scarcely discontented with their lot, for they knew nothing better. The Abbess was a wise, holy, and gentle guide and mother to the sisterhood. She kept them quietly yet constantly employed ; discouraged trifling gossip, but

encouraged innocent mirth. The hours for chapel worship were strictly attended to—the daily routine was unvaried; but she strove to impart life to the heavy monotony, by speaking often of the invisible realities of which these outward rites were *intended* to be symbolical, but which too often encouraged merely knee and lip service.

Beatrice had at first appeared refreshed by the fresh air of the mountain regions which they had traversed. The thought of home had caused her heart to beat with a momentary feeling of pleasure.

“Are you carrying me to my father?” she inquired at length, starting from her cold and unnatural reserve.

The nurse replied that her destination was amidst her native valleys, and that thence she could write to her father, and tell him her wishes.

Much as she occasionally longed for Marie, it was a relief to delay seeing her.

“Whither are you taking me?”

“You will soon know now, lady—to one who will be a friend and guide to you.”

“Nurse, not to a convent,” said Beatrice, half starting from her litter, which was lying on the ground, during one of their mid-day halts for rest and refreshment.

“I take you to a friend, whom you will soon love,” replied the nurse evasively, and would tell no more.

Beatrice's fears were aroused—a convent with its gloomy cells, its darker dungeons, its hidden crimes, its unheard-of tortures, arose before her, and her weak frame again sunk, beneath the dreadful fears her imagination conjured up. Her fever again ran high, and she was in a state of insensibility when carried into the convent, and her nurse was compelled to leave her among strangers before her consciousness returned.

CHAPTER XXV.

EARLY one morning, as the nurse Marien was returning to the castle, after a visit to the cottages below, in search of eggs for her mistress, she was accosted by a tall, gaunt woman, whose garments, though of texture superior to those of the lower orders, were worn and travel-stained.

"Mother," said the stranger, "do you belong to the family at the castle?"

"I should think I did," said Marien, somewhat insulted at the question. "I have served them for these twenty years. I was a sorrowful mother past thirty years of age, and had just lost my first and only child, when I came weeping up this very path, to take the Lady Marie to my bosom. Verily, her sweet face caused me soon to dry my tears, and not many have I shed since, except when——. Belong to them?—I should think I did."

"Have you no thought for the Lady Beatrice?"

"My beautiful rosebud—my joy and pride! Stranger, tell me this moment, do you know anything of her?" said the old woman, eagerly turning to the stranger.

The woman was silent.

"You have no ill tidings of my darling! Who—who are you? speak!" said the poor nurse, with increasing agitation.

"Can the lamb be trusted in the den of the wolf, without fear of danger?" said the woman, extending her arm. "Would you throw that little sportive kid among the hungry dogs, and expect it to escape unhurt?" continued she, pointing to a kid, which was skipping by its mother's side on the ledge of the rock above them.

"Woman, woman, speak not so darkly; what has happened to the child?"

"They have mocked, and deceived, and betrayed her, and her youthful heart is broken," sternly replied the woman.

Marien fell trembling to the ground.

The woman bent over her. "Poor creature, I was hasty," murmured Sybilla (for she it was) to herself. "She loved the poor child—oh! why did she leave her?" She lifted the aged woman in her arms, and carried her towards the castle. The servants were soon alarmed, and their exclamations brought forth Marie. Astonished to see her nurse in the arms of a stranger, and terrified at her deathlike appearance, Marie still retained presence of mind sufficient to desire her to be brought to her room, and to try the usual restoratives.

Marien opened her eyes. "Beatrice, Beatrice, my beautiful child," were her first words.

"No, dear Marien, it is Marie, not our darling Beatrice, who holds you."

"Where is she?" said Marien, looking around for her strange informant; but she had disappeared the moment the servants took Marien from her arms, and could nowhere be found. Marien speedily recovered her recollection sufficiently to repeat her appalling words to Marie, whose worst fears were instantly aroused. The commotion became general, and reached the father's ears. He was quietly pacing the terrace-walk with the priest whom we saw there in bygone days, but whose clerical dress had been strangely modified. He was a priest of the Romish Church no longer—but a minister of the Church of Christ. His parents had received him gladly, as if he were recovered from the dead; the death of an elder son having left them mourning that their only heir was a Romish priest. The gentle Marie had lived in his memory. He was no unfit suitor for her hand.

A few days before Sybilla's arrival, the Pastor D'Albret had again brought him to the castle, and the brave old Count had warmly pressed his remaining there for a while.

He was at this very moment requesting leave to address Marie as a suitor, when the commotion in the castle attracted the old Count's attention, and they

both hurried to the scene of action, which was the nurse's room, whose window overlooked the terrace. Nurse, in fits of weeping—Marie, pale and in tears. What had happened?

The mysterious visit was recounted, the fearful words of the strange woman repeated, and the father's deepest anxieties were awakened.

"Find the woman instantly! Here, Jean, Pierre, hurry down the valley, and scour the roads; one follow the way to the right, the other to the left, and bring her back to explain her dark meaning." But the time had been long, and she was gone beyond recall.

The anxious father paced the hall in silence. Marie wept in trembling anxiety. M. Bernau alone retained his self-command.

"My Lord, suffer me to counsel. This woman is probably a friend; but perchance she has friends at Court, and desires to remain unrecognised. Her warning is a friendly one, and must not be disregarded. You cannot rest without seeking your daughter. The Duchess promised to be as a mother to her. To you she must redeem her pledge. Suffer me to accompany you to Turin and share your anxieties."

"Father, can you journey so far? Your strength"—

"My child is dearer to me than my life," said the father, vehemently. "Nurse will care for you, my Marie. We will start instantly, true friend." And he turned from the hall to make the needful preparations.

Poor young man, he was making no little sacrifice in proposing the journey. Marie's look rewarded him.

"Will you watch over my father?" she said, in a low voice.

"As if he were my own," replied the young man, significantly.

Marie blushed deeply.

"May I hope," said he, taking her hand respectfully, "that my care of him may be esteemed a slight recommendation in your sight?"

"Hush, hush," said she. "Beatrice is in danger. I can hear nothing till my sister is restored to me. How can I think of aught but her?" And she blamed herself for the gush of happiness which his words caused.

"I will not rest till your sister is restored. Trust your father to me. We will do all that love can do to bring her back. Promise you will give way to no undue anxiety. You know in whose hands we are."

Her father's voice was heard calling her. With a look of thanks she hurried from the room.

On that look the young man lived for many a day.

And well it was for Marie that a new source of happiness was opened to her, at the same time that her deep anxiety was awakened for Beatrice; otherwise how could she have borne the days and weeks of suspense which followed the mysterious visit?

CHAPTER XXVI.

A WEEK of tedious journeying, and the travellers, with their attendants, entered Turin. Ever alive to the formalities of the Court, in spite of his hurry to embrace his daughter, the old Count rested awhile in one of the public places of refreshment, in order to change his travel-stained garments before presenting himself at the palace of his sovereign. He then proceeded to the palace alone, desiring his companion to await his return. He appeared first at the private door, which was used for ingress and egress by the Duchess's suite, and demanded of the porter admittance to the apartments of the Lady Beatrice.

The man stood confounded. He recognised the well-known figure of the brave old soldier.

"General!" said he, "glad to see you, my Lord!"

"My daughter's rooms, Giovanni," said the Count, returning the military salute of the man, whom he recognised as an old soldier.

"Your daughter, my Lord? The Lady Beatrice has departed hence."

"Departed? Where?"

" 'Tis not for servants to speak, my Lord. We all loved the sweet young lady."

" True, true—the Duchess?"

" Is at present preparing for a Court night."

" Convey to her my name. Tell her, her old servant, Count Julien, begs an audience."

" It would be well, my Lord, to pass round to the grand entrance. I will do your errand within; but my office extends not to introducing you to her Grace's presence."

The sight of a foreign army would have been less appalling to the Duchess than that of the feeble old man, who vainly sought to hide his deep agitation beneath the respectful courtesy with which he ever strove to regard his sovereign.

" Always welcome, my Lord," were the Duchess's first words, giving her hand to be kissed, in return for the deep obeisance of the aged soldier, who had so bravely fought her country's battles for nearly half a century.

" My daughter, your Grace. . . . In this room I parted with her. I lent her—my fairest treasure—to your Grace. You promised to be as a mother to my motherless one."

" Sit down, my Lord. We are alone. I have much to say."

His tottering limbs refused to support him, and he sunk into a chair.

"Your daughter was greatly beloved amongst us, my Lord. Her beauty, her sweet and gentle temper, her wit and liveliness, made her a universal favourite."

The old man bowed his head, in acknowledgment of praise he felt fully deserved.

"The Duke often remarked her when he was with us, and my excellent friend the Archbishop took the deepest interest in her."

Neither of these last pieces of information were particularly pleasant to the father. He knew the Duke's weakness for beauty, and he was far too honest and straightforward himself to admire the Archbishop, whose extraordinary talents, as well as craft and subtlety, were well known to him.

"His Grace's deep interest induced him earnestly to desire to bring so fair and engaging a being as your daughter into the true Church," continued the Duchess.

The Count started, and sat bolt upright in his chair.

"Knowing your attachment to our holy religion, he was convinced you would feel truly grateful to him should he succeed in securing her eternal safety, which, as you are well aware, was deeply perilled by her heretical views."

"Madam," replied the Count, hastily, "I cannot, even from my sovereign, hear such words. Her mother, madam—her sainted mother"—and his voice

trembled. "I have never known a woman, Catholic or Protestant, worthy to hold a candle to her mother! That mother is in heaven—if there be a holy heaven, as I believe there is. I wish the Archbishop was as sure of going there himself," added he, in a low voice.

"Your views, my Lord," said the Duchess, gently, "are scarcely in accordance with Pope Pius's creed, which is the orthodox creed of our holy Church. Believing, as his Grace is bound to do, that salvation is only to be found in the true Church, he loved your daughter's soul well enough to seek to secure her safety."

"And what effect had his Grace's exhortations on the child?" said the Count, with difficulty restraining his anger.

"His efforts were crowned with success."

"And Beatrice is"——

"Beatrice has joined the true Church."

"Madam, madam," said the Count, starting from his seat, "is my word to be counted as a thing of nought, a figment of no value? I promised that child's mother that I would never interfere with her daughter's religion, and, of course, that promise implied I would never allow it to be interfered with. I told you that promise when I left her in your care; and when your Grace condescended to say you would act as a mother to her, I considered that that promise

would be acted upon. Pardon me, your Grace ; I am a plain old soldier. I have learned honour and truth in fighting your husband's and your father's battles, my noble masters, who scorned to break their word. I have been deceived where I trusted," and the old man's wrath grew hotter and hotter. "That cursed Archbishop, what business had he to meddle with my wife's child?" and curses deep and low fell from his lips like rain.

"My Lord!" said the Duchess ; but the father's anger was not to be restrained.

"My lamb—my sweet lamb, in his hands. Better, far better, have sold her to the Turks. Where is the child? Your Grace has not told me where she is. Has he murdered her body in his tender care for her soul? The old hypocrite ; the"——

"Count Julien," said the Duchess, with dignity, "I can excuse a father's anxiety, but I will not hear such language—such coarse abuse of so holy a man."

The Count, who was too glad of the absent Archbishop to vent his anger on, instead of the present Duchess, whom in his heart he condemned nearly as strongly, reined in for a moment his indignation. The image of his beautiful Beatrice rose before him, and his heart yearned to shelter her once more in his arms. He burst into tears, and throwing himself at the Duchess's feet—

"Your Grace is a mother. By all the love you bear your only child, tell me instantly, I conjure you, where my child is."

The grief of a strong man is strangely infectious; and as the hoary head before her trembled with the violence of his emotion, the tears filled the Duchess's eyes. She answered immediately—

"In the Ursuline Convent, in the Val Moutiere."

"A convent!" and he started to his feet, rage again over-mastering sorrow. "In a convent! without a word of reference to me. Madam, madam! is this the reward of my fifty years of service? A convent! A thousand times had I rather she was in a Turk's harem. A convent!—but she cannot have taken the vows; there is time yet to save her."

"Save her? my Lord! is this your thanks to me, and to the Archbishop, for winning your fair child into the only true Church?"

The Count looked her full in the face. Her eye fell before that look of indignant scrutiny.

"Is this the care of her which your Grace promised me?" replied he sternly. "Can you suppose I would ever have trusted my treasure to your keeping, had I imagined you would have robbed me of her?"

"Consider her soul."

"I had rather she shared her mother's lot both in this world and the next, than the lot in either world of that Judas the Archbishop."

And, unable to restrain his fury, with a deep obeisance, the old soldier hurried from the room, leaving the Duchess astonished at his boldness, and yet in her inmost heart admiring him for it—glad to be relieved from the painful duty of telling him how the conversion was effected, and compelled to shudder herself whenever she thought of the means that had been used, and then blaming herself for, even in thought, dissenting from the views of her spiritual director.

Filled with anger and grief, the Count returned instantly to his lodgings, where M. Bernau was expecting him. He had made some inquiries relative to Beatrice, during the Count's absence, and had heard the true tale of her conversion, and the subsequent discovery and disappearance of the monk Antony. The tale had outraged every honourable feeling, and worked him up into a state of excitement such as he rarely experienced. The Count related his conversation with the Duchess, and expressed his determination of starting off directly to the Val Moutiere, to see whether he could not withdraw his child from the convent, in which he hoped she had been placed contrary to her own will. Happily for both parties, the Archbishop was absent, as the consequence of a meeting between him and the exasperated father might have been serious, even before the latter knew the unjustifiable means which had been used to effect Beatrice's conversion. Bernau shared his impatience to recom-

mence his journey, and they left Turin that same evening. By degrees Bernau broke to him the whole tale of guilt and imposture of which his beloved child had been the victim. He was alternately so the prey of rage against her deceivers, and love and pity towards his child, that the state of his mind, acting on a body weakened by his previous illness, and the hurry and fatigue of his double journey, brought on an attack of fever. He battled bravely against it, and day after day continued his journey, in spite of all his companion's entreaties that he should rest and recruit. But when they reached a village, within a few hours' ride of the convent, his strength was wholly exhausted. He would have fallen from his horse had not his companion's watchful eye detected the increasing illness, and his arm been on the watch to save him from danger. He lifted him, with the help of the servants, from the horse, and carried him into a little inn by the roadside, and there he lay for a fortnight, unable to move or to speak, and during the greater part of that time in a state of happy insensibility to the past, the present, and the future.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WHEN Beatrice awoke from unconsciousness she was astonished at the scene around her. She found herself lying on a low couch without curtains, in a small whitewashed room. The coverings of her bed, though of coarse texture, were of snowy whiteness, and the uncarpeted floor of her room was scrupulously clean. On a table near her bed, several medicines were lying, and near them a bunch of grapes, on a small plate. There was a chair near the table, which seemed to have been lately occupied. A small altar with a crucifix above it, two more chairs, and a vase of beautiful flowers on a ledge near the window, completed the furniture of the room.

The window was open. A soft yet fresh air was blowing in. The blue sky alone was visible through it, as Beatrice lay upon her couch; but the perfect stillness was a refreshment to the invalid, and she remained motionless, in a state of almost enjoyment. Suddenly the note of a bird was heard, and a little robin hopped on to the window sill, and, shaking its head, and turning its bright eyes in every direction, seeing

no enemy near, it perched upon the bar which ran across the window, and poured forth its sweet and simple lay, its beautiful throat perceptibly thrilling as it sang.

A gush of tenderness welled up in Beatrice's heart. The air reminded her of *home*. Oh, magic word!—the bird's sweet notes seemed to carry her there. She could have fancied she saw her mother gazing on her; and though the face seemed sad, there was tenderest love in the expression; and Beatrice wept, but they were soft and healing tears—tears such as she had not shed since she had been deceived and blighted in her heart's deepest affections.

“Mother, oh mother! let me lay my head upon thy knees—thou wilt not cast me off, my own, own mother.”

As she said these words, the door opened, and an elderly lady entered, clothed in the dress of the Ursuline nuns; but Beatrice regarded not the dress, the face seemed so familiar to her. Could it be that death had given up its prey? Nearer came the lady, and bent over her.

“My daughter, you are awake?”

The voice—the gentle voice—it was her mother's tone.

Beatrice half rose and held out her arms.

“Oh, tell me who you are?”

The lady sat down beside her, laid Beatrice's

head upon her shoulder, and kissed her brow, murmuring a blessing on her.

"Oh, bless me again—I need it!—my own dear mother's voice. Who—who are you?"

"Can you bear to hear?" said the lady, her voice trembling.

"Oh!" said Beatrice, a light dawning on her, "you are—I am sure you are—my mother's sister—my aunt Emmeline!"

Kisses and tears were the sole reply. Beatrice lay perfectly still in the loving arms which held her—a sense of peace stole over her, and glimmering thoughts of her heavenly Father's love, in guiding her to the only relative who could really help her—a momentary feeling, "God has not forsaken me; there may be a hope yet, even for me!"

It was but a moment. The thought of her fetters returned—the Church which she had entered from such unworthy motives.

"Your dress, Aunt," said she, looking at the conventual garb. "You are a nun!"

"I am Abbess of this convent."

"Ah!" said Beatrice, sinking back on her pillow, and opening her eyes with a fearful, troubled look, "I am in a convent!"

"You are with one who loves you tenderly, my child."

The fearful look passed away.

"My mother's sister!—You loved her?"

The Abbess was silent a moment, and then said, "*Loved* her?—love was a slight word to express what I felt for my sister. My life was bound up in hers. She was mother, sister, friend, guide, all in one—so gentle, and yet so firm—so pious, and yet so cheerful—so clever, and yet so humble—the most dutiful daughter, the brightest pattern of womanly excellence my eyes have ever seen! No, I shall never see her equal here!"

Beatrice's face glowed with delight, and she held out her arms again to clasp her aunt. These praises of her mother gave her confidence in her newly-found relative.

"But she hated Rome," said Beatrice, in a low voice.

"Hush, hush, my child; let us leave that matter untouched. Did she talk to you much about the Church?"

"Only when death was drawing near."

"But she talked much of religion?"

"It was her daily talk. Her every action referred itself to God. She strove in her whole life, as well as by her conversation, to lead us to God."

"Ah, my sister, that was our father's teaching;—well you acted up to it. Error, he told us, was not so effectually combated by abusing it, as by living and acting *truth*. Now, Beatrice, we will act on this advice. Speak not of the Catholic Church, or of the

Reformed Church. Look into your own heart—examine it well—see how religion stands in your soul. Are you living to God, or have you forgotten Him? Are you serving God, or are you serving the world?"

Beatrice burst into tears. Such questions had never been put to her since she parted with her sister.

"I have been so deceived," she whispered.

"You have, my child—cruelly deceived; but think not of others' sins now. Use the quiet time you can command here in searching out your own spirit, and tracing the course you have followed since you left your happy home."

"But, aunt, must I stay in a convent?"

"Only as long as you yourself desire it. There will be no constraint upon you."

"But I have heard such tales of persons being forced to take the vows."

"Many of them may be true; but, Beatrice, try to trust my word. Stay with me, my child, as long as you feel disposed. Write, as soon as your strength returns, to your father, and whenever he desires to receive you, and you are willing to return to his care, I will facilitate your removal. Now try to sleep. God bless my sister's child."

Under the soothing sense of the protection of a true friend, Beatrice did sleep. Hours passed, and she still remained in unbroken repose. She had found a haven of rest, for a time at least.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MEANWHILE we must relate how the gentle Abbess had received the relative so unexpectedly entrusted to her care. The sisterhood had been astonished at the new life with which the arrival of the sick stranger, from the Court of Turin, had inspired their usually calm superior. None were present when the nurse, who accompanied Beatrice, had unfolded her sad history to the sympathising Abbess. None witnessed the burst of feeling, the expression of which even her long habits of self-discipline could not control, when she found that this poor sufferer, the story of whose wrongs had caused her heart to burn with indignation, even as a stranger, was the child of Count Julien, her only sister's husband.

Without understanding the cause of her emotion, the good nurse felt sure that the poor deserted girl, whom her kind heart had taught her to love, would find at least one affectionate friend in the convent in which she was placed, and she took her parting look at Beatrice with more comfort than she had supposed possible.

"Ah, mother," she said, as she stood with the Abbess by the side of the then unconscious sufferer, "'twas a tender lamb to leave in that rough world at Turin; and the way they treated her, in letting that gay young man win her heart, and then shew that he could never marry her, as soon as they had gained their ends! It was something like 'seething a kid in its mother's milk,' which I have heard the Jews were forbidden to do, by Him who looks after the meanest of his creatures; and they will not go unpunished who treated this innocent so roughly."

"God forgive them, nurse! And who do you say were the chief movers in it?"

"The Duchess had a hand in it, sure enough; but the plan was laid by the Archbishop."

The Abbess started. She stooped and kissed Beatrice again, and muttered—"Another heart broken by him! His vengeance, indeed, sleeps not! Father, daughter, and now the daughter's child,—'tis hard to forgive." Then she said aloud to the nurse,—“Did he know that you were bringing her here?”

"Oh no, lady. He fell ill, and went to Rome. The Duchess seemed not to know what to do with her, and I was afraid Father Augustino might order her somewhere where they might not be kinder to her than the Archbishop had been; so I offered to bring the poor thing here, as I knew how kind you

were to my sister, and I felt sure you would take pity on her."

"Pity her, poor child! who could help it? She wants a mother's care, and she shall have it. You have done well, nurse, and God will reward you."

"I have girls of my own, madam, and I thought what it would be to have them so left."

"Why did they not send her home?"

"I fancy, madam (only, in courts one must see and hear nothing), they were somewhat afraid of her father's anger; and, moreover, they wanted to keep her a Catholic, and I've heard say her sister is a very firm heretic."

"Did she wish to go home herself?"

"I have heard her speak of her sister often in her dreams, and sometimes she would talk to herself about her; but she seemed to feel that her being now a Catholic would be a great separation, and she was afraid to see her."

"Well, nurse, when you return to Turin, tell the Duchess that you delivered the child to my care, and that I promised to watch over her health, and to do my best to restore her."

"Thank you, lady, I was sure of your kindness; and tell the sweet child, when she awakens to consciousness, that her nurse left her with tears and blessings."

That night the Abbess herself watched by Beatrice's couch, and sad were the communings she had with her own heart. The past had *slept* awhile—affliction had done its worst with her. Seduced by her own headstrong affection for an unworthy object into an abandonment of her father and home, it took months of harshness and ill-treatment to alienate her from him for whom she had forsaken all that had formerly been her happiness; but when she heard from the lips of her seducer, that not love for her, but hatred for her sister, had caused him to seek to win her to the arms of Rome, and then to fly with him from innocence and peace—when she heard him curse the unborn child that would proclaim their sin to the world, and desire her to put an end to its harmless life as soon as it should be born—her eyes began to open to his true character, and she felt all the agonies of despair and remorse. Utterly regardless of her frantic appeals to his honour or his pity, he left her in the village of —, near the convent where she now resided, under the care of a coarse-minded, vulgar woman, an old servant of his family, with strict injunctions to keep her in close confinement till after her child's birth. Unknown to the wretched mother, he also left strict injunctions with the woman to destroy the infant as soon as it should see the light. It was not unnatural to this woman to be harsh and severe to the poor heart-broken creature

left in her custody; but when the new-born baby smiled in her face, and twined its tiny fingers round one of her own, her woman's heart refused to let her murder the innocent creature. She told the mother that her babe had been still-born, and deceived her with a sight of a neighbour's child, to whom such an affliction occurred nearly at the same time, while she gave the living child to the care of the mother of the dead infant, until she could determine what to do with it.

The young mother had the comfort of the assurance that the little breathless thing which she wept over as her own, had escaped any unfair dealing, which, from the father's character, she had dreaded was intended for it, and she kept it by her side till decent burial was secured for it. Her miserable betrayer took care that she should have early intelligence of her father's death, the destruction of her home, and the restoration of Popery among her father's flock, to which he added the certain news that her sister had shared her father's fate. Nor did Alfric in the least desire to have it concealed that he had planned and executed these deeds of destruction and death.

Thoroughly crushed by this intelligence, and ashamed to face any friend who had ever known her in her days of innocence, she resolved (and this was what Alfric desired to force her into) to hide her shame and her woes in the cloister. It was not till after

she had taken all the vows, that she heard accidentally that her sister had used every means to find her in vain, and that she had become the wife of Count Julien.

When the mother was safely housed in the convent, her stern jailer resolved to carry the baby to its father's sister, and to tell her its history and parentage.

Alfric had begun early to make all around him miserable. He had been an only son, and thoroughly spoiled by his parents, who humoured him in every way, and never strove to restrain the violent passions with which he was born.

His sister had been the slave of his humours and caprices from childhood, but had loved him with the true love of a sister.

She was on the eve of marriage with one who promised well to reward her for the submission and trials of her youth by a married life of peace and affection. Alfric came home from his college, to be present at the wedding.

From some slight cause, a quarrel arose between him and his intended brother-in-law. Too happy to give way to anger on the eve of his wedding-day, the intended bridegroom was leaving the house to the angry youth, when a sudden blow from Alfric felled him to the earth. A sudden blow, and repented of the moment given; but repentance came too late.

The poor fellow lingered a few hours, and died in the arms of his distracted *fiancée*, at the very hour at which they were to have been united.

Gladly would Alfrie have recalled the mad deed, when he witnessed his sister's despair and his parents' anguish; but he was too proud to let them see his suffering, and hard and cold he ever appeared amidst the wretchedness he had caused. Death took them one by one, till only his sister was left, and she avoided the sight of one who had caused her such a life-long grief, and who never seemed to share with her any of her sorrows. But the old servant believed her young mistress would be glad to train up her brother's child, and that it would be safe from his knowledge under her care.

We have traced that poor child through his youth of promise to his miserable end. Better, indeed, for him had the thread of his existence been cut in earlier years.

And now Sybilla had dragged her weary limbs to the same convent which sheltered Beatrice, desiring to end her wretched life in an abode consecrated to God's service.

She knew who was the Abbess of the convent; but she had heard so much of her sanctity and gentleness, that she feared not to encounter her, even should her name and parentage be elicited.

She knocked at the door late one evening—the very evening of the day on which Beatrice had recovered her consciousness—and prayed for admittance as a houseless wanderer. Brought before the Abbess, she expressed herself weary of life, and desirous of spending her small remnant of it in the service of God.

“Have you no relations who claim your care, my good woman?” asked the Abbess.

“None,” replied Sybilla. “My parents died long since. My only brother needs me not—hates me, scorns me. He whom I trained as my child, my joy, my pride, has flung himself from life, and what remains for me but despair and death?”

“Repentance and submission,” gently replied the Abbess.

Sybilla drew herself up.

“I have less to repent of than they have who drove me to despair; and would you have me submit to the haughty oppression of those who have no right to rule?”

“Submit yourself under the mighty hand of God,” replied the Abbess; “and learn to forgive, as you hope to be forgiven.”

“You—you say that, Emmeline! Have you forgiven?”

The Abbess started at the once-familiar name, and looked eagerly at the weather-beaten figure before

her, but traced no resemblance to any one she had known in youth.

"Who you may be I know not," she replied, calmly; "but if you have heard that I had much to forgive, I thank God I am able to tell you I have forgiven, and do forgive."

"How—how have you learned to forgive such wrongs?"

"By remembering daily how much I have to be forgiven. The thought of the sins of my youth is ever with me; and my daily sins against my Saviour warn me to be careful how I retain any unforgiving feelings towards others."

The wanderer sat down with the air of one astonished, and gazed for a few moments at the Abbess. A tear stole down her cheek. Ashamed of the unwonted emotion, she covered her face with her hands. At length she said, in an altered voice, "Can you teach me this wonderful lesson?"

"No," said the Abbess, "I cannot teach it, but I can lead you to the same place where I learned it. I can direct you to One who *can* teach. He not only can, but *will* teach whosoever asks him."

"You will receive me, then?"

"Surely, if you will submit to our rules; but tell me who you are."

"Not at present. Trust me a little while—I will tell you before long."

"It is unusual," said the Abbess; "for I, at least, in the convent, expect to be informed of the name of any one who seeks admittance here."

"I cannot yet. Must I go before you teach me how to forgive?"

The Abbess looked at her again searchingly. The stranger met her gaze without either boldness or faltering.

"I will venture," at length she replied with a smile. "What are we to call you?"

"Mara," said she—"call me Sister Mara. In years long since gone, one read me the history of Ruth and Naomi, and I have never forgotten it. Like Naomi, I am empty indeed—bereft of all I loved. The Lord hath dealt bitterly with me; but, like Ruth, I say to you—'Thy God shall be my God. . . . Where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried.'"

CHAPTER XXIX.

BEATRICE recovered her strength slowly. The hours she passed in her little apartment were not unprofitably spent. Her aunt supplied her with a New Testament. With a flood of tears she received the sacred volume. Where, oh where, was her own Bible? Little did she guess into whose hands it had fallen!

It seemed to her as if ages had passed since that terrible morning in the chapel.

Years had certainly been added to her young life, by the events in which she had borne so painful a part.

But she had been awakened to the full sense of the value of eternal things by means of the total wreck of her earthly happiness. Her religion in early youth had been one of imitation. She had been bred a Protestant, and had felt proud of her own privileges, while she mistook hatred of Rome for love of the truth. She now experienced that real change which is at the root of all personal religion.

She gradually awoke to the sense of her own

sinfulness, and long she continued without hope of pardon.

When once the sense of sin became her prevailing feeling, no room was left for the anger and abhorrence of her betrayers which had hitherto filled her mind.

At length a light dawned on her spirit, and she was able to cast herself on the Merciful, with full hope of pardon. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

But this was not a *short work*. She had to pass through many hours of anguish, many harrowing reminiscences, many depths of passionate sorrow, before peace settled on her spirit.

The Abbess was a tender and affectionate, and yet a faithful and wise friend.

She did not fear to probe her wounds. She desired not to see a partial cure effected. She longed to see the roots of repentance and faith deeply fixed, in order that the living fruits of holiness and love might follow.

As Beatrice's health strengthened, she mingled occasionally with the sisterhood. Nothing she saw amongst them induced her to desire a convent life. With scarcely an exception, their minds were contracted—their views of life were bounded by the convent in which they lived. Nor did the heavenly Bridegroom, to whom they had been devoted by their vows, seem to occupy more

of their thoughts than if they had been living in the hurry of the daily pursuits of the world, which they conceived they had forsaken. The bell called them at stated hours to prayers, and they knelt in apparent devotion in the chapel; but Beatrice often detected the wandering eye and listless manner which she had felt herself and seen in others at the Protestant service she had attended. The daily business of the convent interested them as fully, and occasioned as much discussion and contrivance, as the affairs of their families cost the mothers of the valley.

Except with the Abbess and two or three of the sisterhood, Beatrice felt that the things of time were as all-important in the convent as they were in Turin—the things of eternity as *uncongenial*. Ah! it is the *heaven-set heart* which it is so difficult to obtain. No place, no outward forms can give it—it is the work of God's Spirit alone. It is not harder to preserve it in a *court* than it is in a *convent*. The crucifixion of self is the daily duty of every Christian—a duty as hard to fulfil in a convent as in a court.

Every one is apt to think—"Were my circumstances different in this or that particular, I could serve God better." No such thing. The difficulty is in the heart within, not in the outward circumstances. Get the heart under the influence of grace, and where the body is will make little difference.

This is a truth broadly stated. It is, of course, open to some modifications. The heart under the influence of grace, implies the will renewed by the power of God—the likeness of the Saviour again impressed upon the heart. An individual so renewed will not wilfully place himself in circumstances contrary to the will of Him whom he takes as his Guide.

One pale girl, Sister Angelica, excited Beatrice's sympathy. Her whole heart seemed engrossed with her devotions. Beatrice fancied she could detect symptoms of suffering in her demeanour. She seemed to be seeking to subdue self, and yet to find self too powerful. She avoided Beatrice's company, when she made one or two efforts to get into conversation with her. Beatrice asked the Abbess about her, and was told that the young nun had not been very long in the convent; that, till recently, she had appeared to find peace, and to be contented there, but that the Abbess knew no cause for her present evident depression.

"I rarely seek confidence, Beatrice," said the kind Abbess. "In the mind of each young nun, from time to time, a heart-yearning for home and friends is apt to recur. Talk of it, and dwell on it, and it becomes deeper. Try and make the convent more happy, and the daily routine more interesting, and the mind recovers its tone. The nuns know they are

here for life, and they, in most cases, learn by degrees to accommodate themselves to circumstances which they cannot now alter."

"But do none die of home-sickness?" inquired Beatrice.

The Abbess sighed. "I can scarcely say such an event never occurs. The sorrows of the heart sometimes act on the body so as to produce illness, which terminates in death. The poor nun is said to die of liver complaint or nervous debility, when the first cause was undoubtedly mental suffering—but, thank God, such cases are very rare."

Beatrice resolved at length to write to her sister, and the Abbess despatched the letter by a trusty messenger.

Meanwhile, one in the convent drew towards Beatrice with the most passionate attachment—an attachment which Beatrice cordially returned, without being aware of the cause of the mutual attraction felt by two individuals as dissimilar in outward appearance and circumstances as two individuals could possibly be.

Sister Mara, the weather-beaten, coarse-featured, stern old woman, might constantly be found in the apartments of the beautiful and refined Beatrice, while either listened to the other's words with the deepest interest.

Often Beatrice read the New Testament aloud, page

after page, chapter after chapter, while Sister Mara listened with silent attention. With her head resting on her hand, and tears dropping like rain from her eyes, she sat, rarely making remarks, but begging occasionally that certain passages might be read again.

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

“If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.”

“Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven you.”

Such passages as these were read, till both reader and hearer knew the words by heart.

“Oh that I could but know that He had forgiven me!” said Mara suddenly, one day when the Abbess had joined them, and sat herself listening to the Book she loved so well.

“Forgiven you what, sister?”

“My life-long ignorance and neglect of him who died upon the cross,” replied Sister Mara. “Oh! I have been a good Catholic—confessed duly, paid my dues to the priest, attended daily mass, given alms to the poor, loved the Virgin, and honoured the saints; but my Saviour I never thought of—never knew I required. My Saviour’s spirit I had none of—none. Holy, merciful, and mild, gentle and forgiving he

was. I am none of these. He must cast me off for ever."

"Daughter, for whom did he die that bitter death upon the cross?" asked the Abbess.

Mara stared, and answered not.

"Oh sister, dear sister," sobbed Beatrice, putting her arm round her friend, "he died there for sinners—for sinners such as you and I are. The holy and the good need him not, if there are such. We need him; and wicked though we have been, he died for us."

Poor Mara struggled on. Daily her health grew worse and worse, yet she crept into chapel during the daily services, and often spent hours there alone, kneeling before the cross. When found there, it required the aid of the nuns to bring her into the refectory, her limbs seemed stiffened with age and weakness.

Often the Abbess whispered—"Canst *thou forgive?*" and she shook her head in sad denial; but on her knees she sought aid against the evil spirit within, of whose existence she had only lately been aware, and earnestly did she implore the presence of that Spirit whose help is never sought in vain.

Deep, indeed, had been her wrongs. That one individual, from his cradle to his declining years, had marred her every happiness, and dashed her every hope to pieces. Her boy, her boy, her last treasure—how had he stolen him! But as her own sense of

sin deepened, her thoughts dwelt less and less on those she had lost. Her own personal state—the awful eternity which she felt before her—concentrated her thoughts on self. How should she stand at that bar where no sins of others can be received as any excuse for our own delinquencies?

She could not receive Christ into her unforgiving heart; or rather, was it not because she received Him not that her heart continued unforgiving?

Sometimes the Abbess feared whether that all-conquering grace were indeed at work in her, so resolutely did the evil spirit within set itself against the law of love, which is the Christian's motto.

"Now abideth faith, hope, love—but the greatest of these is love."

"Lady Beatrice," said Sister Mara one day, "tell me truly, have you forgiven all who have wronged you?"

Beatrice was silent. Her colour rose. Sister Mara looked at her with her bright, piercing eyes, as if she would read her thoughts, and Beatrice hid her face in her hands, and wept without restraint.

"Poor child," muttered the aged woman, "she cannot—no wonder."

But Beatrice removed her hands from her face, and calmly met the searching gaze which was still scrutinising her.

"Sister," she replied, "I hope I do with

my whole heart forgive. God knows the struggle. But I was worse than they were. I was trained a Protestant; they, alas! were trained in Romish errors. I trust my grievous fall is forgiven. God help them, and pardon them!"

Sister Mara rose at these words, and, advancing towards Beatrice, clasped her in her arms, and with a strong and earnest voice pronounced on her a fervent blessing.

"His blessing will be yours for ever. His Spirit is in you. He may come to me. Oh, Beatrice, pray, pray that this old hard heart may be broken."

As the strong frame grew weaker from day to day, the strong spirit within also bowed beneath "the mighty Hand." Truly Sister Mara became as a weaned child. She listened to the Abbess with attention and respect; she confessed and received absolution from the priest, who visited the convent periodically, and who was anxious to confess Beatrice also; but the Abbess stood her friend, and, though she could not conceal the truth that the young girl was a professed Romanist, she requested the priest not to press an interview with her till his next visit. He consented, though unwillingly, to her request.

"Has Sister Angelica confessed?" inquired the Abbess.

"Oh, yes," replied the priest carelessly; "anything new there?"

"I fancied she appeared uneasy and depressed," replied the Abbess.

"No," said the priest; "she made the usual confession—difficulty of attending at prayers, wandering heart in her duties. I ordered her to try some night prayers in the chapel, and absolved her as usual."

The priest's visits were only occasional. Before his next, the Abbess hoped that Beatrice would have been claimed by her friends. Meanwhile, her attentions to Sister Mara were continued, and the dying nun seemed never so happy as when Beatrice was sitting by her side, and reading to her from the Word of God.

The light stole in ray by ray, till the whole mind was becoming filled, and the darkness of despair giving place to the peace of the gospel.

Oh the unspeakable joy to Beatrice, amidst her feeling of deep unworthiness, to be permitted to minister to the spiritual good of a dying fellow-creature!

They learned together; but as the aged one was to be removed first, her progress seemed quicker; and her spiritual perceptions daily grew brighter and brighter.

Many a passage which Beatrice had thought she fully understood, was clothed with new beauty by the simple remarks of Sister Mara.

Days passed on, till Beatrice had now been nearly

two months in the convent. Her father had lain in the village, only a few miles off, more than half that time ; but when his fever left him, he would trust no one but himself to seek his child in the convent. Bernau had sent tidings of his illness to Marie, imploring her to make her mind easy on the subject of her father, as the worst was already past. Bernau's messenger brought back Beatrice's letter, which Marie had received, and its contents reassured the Count as to the reception he should meet with at the convent ; and the prospect of his child's being restored to him without difficulty, quickened his recovery, and he was at length able to proceed to the village, which lay at the foot of the hill on which the convent was built.

But the news of his errand had preceded him. His attendants had heard enough of Beatrice's wrongs at Turin to make them indignant at the manner in which she had been cheated and deceived. They now suspected that she was detained against her will at the convent. They had not been sparing of their comments, and various misrepresentations of Beatrice's circumstances had been rumoured about the village. The dwellers in that valley were determined Protestants. Their pastor was a warm-hearted, energetic man, who ruled them with a strong hand, and whom they both feared and loved.

He was personally acquainted with the Abbess,

and venerated her holy and consistent character. Highly as he disapproved of convent life, his influence ever ran in the direction of existing institutions; and he had more than once succeeded in averting from the convent, attacks with which it had been threatened by the young men of the valley, more from love of mischief, and the pleasure of making a disturbance, than from any real sense of the evils of the monastic system.

Robbing convents and frightening nuns had been a favourite pastime among nominal Protestants in Switzerland; men whose hearts being wholly uninfluenced by real religion, made the profession of it a cloak for the indulgence of lawless and predatory habits. Nowhere, however, had the rights of property been *more respected* than in Switzerland; and the wholesale spoliation of Church property, which had disgraced the English Reformation, was utterly unknown there.

Beatrice's supposed compulsory detention in the convent afforded too good a pretext for attacking the convent, to be overlooked by certain loose characters. They took their measures cautiously and secretly, lest their intentions should be frustrated by their energetic Pastor.

The execution of their plan was hastened by hearing that the Count was actually on his way to their village. If his daughter should be quietly re-

stored to him, they would lose their sport; and they resolved, therefore, to make their attack on the convent before they expected that he could arrive to claim his child.

The consequences of their scheme will be detailed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXX.

ABOUT eleven o'clock one morning, a violent knocking was heard at the door of the convent. The portress put her head out of the little window which commanded a view of the entrance, and saw, to her dismay, two or three dozen ill-looking fellows standing round it. In reply to her inquiry of what they wanted, one, who appeared to be the leader, said that they desired to speak to the Lady Abbess immediately.

The frightened old woman hurried off to her superior and informed her that a whole army of ruffians was thundering at the gate. Astonished at the announcement, the Abbess desired her, by all means, to keep the gate fast, and to ask them their business from the window. The men, however, insisted on seeing the Abbess, and refused to deliver a message to any one else. The noise they made at the gate presently alarmed the whole sisterhood, who came together into the common sitting-room like startled deer, and entreated the Abbess not to speak to the rude men. "They will go away if we take no

notice of them." "Suppose they should break into the convent," said another, "and turn us out, as they did the nuns of St Catherine;" and everybody had a story of some convent being rifled and the inmates turned out. The knocking continued, and the Abbess thought it better to appear at the window.

"The Abbess, the Abbess," they cried.

"I am here," was her calm reply. "Wherefore do you come hither to disturb our quiet home?"

"We want the Lady Beatrice, Count Julien's daughter, who is unlawfully detained in this convent," replied the leader.

"And who are you, and by what authority do you demand her?" inquired the Abbess.

"We would take her to her father, who lies ill in the valley."

"A likely story," said the Abbess. "Can you produce any letter written by her father?"

"Come, come, old lady," said a square-built, coarse-featured man, pressing before the leader, "none of your nonsense. Give up the young lady at once, or it will be the worse for you."

"The Lady Beatrice is at full liberty to leave this convent whenever she pleases, but I will not certainly deliver her into the hands of any messenger except one who brings full credentials, either from her father, or from the Duchess of Savoy, from whom I received her."

The tumult waxed louder and louder.

"The Duchess of Savoy has no authority here. No foreign dukes over us. Have you got her in a dungeon? Give her up, or we will burn down your convent, and smoke out the whole nest of you."

The leader with difficulty stilled them; but when his voice could again be heard, he addressed the Abbess.

"Well, madam, do as you think best. We give you ten minutes for consultation, and then if the young lady is not forthcoming, we warn you, look to yourselves."

"By what right," said the Abbess, all her inborn dignity sustaining her, "by what right do you dare to dictate to me? Return to the valley, or bring me proper credentials from the Bailli that you are true and honest men, and I will consider your proposal; but it is out of all reason that I should deliver up a noble lady to your care without knowing who you are that demand her."

"Might makes right," said the dark-featured man, winking at his companions. "Words are of no avail, old lady," added he. "The ten minutes are wearing away."

Thus urged, the poor Abbess hurried to the room of Sister Mara, where Beatrice was constantly to be found.

"What is it?" said the poor invalid, as the Abbess

entered, with a pale and frightened countenance. "Will they not let me die in peace? Who is come to disturb my dying moments?"

Death was indeed approaching—but the mind of the sufferer was still clear.

"No; do not take her away, mother," as the Abbess signed to Beatrice to accompany her. "Let me hear the tidings; I can bear them."

Sybilla fancied her brother had sent to force her from the asylum where she had at length found peace.

"No, dear sister, the noise respects not you, but my dear daughter here," replied the Abbess.

Beatrice started. "What? me, mother!"

"A band of strange-looking men at the gate demand Lady Beatrice, Count Julien's daughter, and say that her father is in the valley awaiting her," said the Abbess. Beatrice turned pale.

"Oh, mother, impossible! He would have sent Marien, with some trusty messenger, if he could not have come himself; it is some plan to draw me from your sheltering care."

"I fear so, too, my child," replied the Abbess. "But they come storming and threatening, and we have no defence but our innocence."

"Oh mother, mother, why did I come to bring this fear and trouble upon you?" said poor Beatrice, the tears gathering in her eyes.

Before the Abbess could reply, Sister Angelica rushed in, pale and trembling.

"They have got in! Two men have climbed the wall—they are opening the front gate to the rest; hear them!"

And the small convent resounded with the shouts of the troop, who were pouring in, through the front entrance, into the court-yard, and into the kitchen and buttery. The shrieks of the nuns were heard, as they flew in all directions, to avoid the rudeness of the intruders. The Abbess hurried out of the room to see whether her words could be of any use to prevent the violence which she feared was meditated against her convent.

"To the chapel," she said to all her frightened children. "There is but one entrance there; the door is strong, and will resist their efforts. All of you go to the chapel, and I will try once more to address the ruffians."

Sybilla started up with the energy of desperation: "Let me speak to them."

"Sister Mara," said Beatrice, in vain seeking to detain her, "impossible, you cannot even reach the chapel."

"I can, I will," said she; and, wrapping a large shawl round her, she rapidly passed along the passage and descended the stairs which led to the lower part of the house, Beatrice closely following her. Along

the lower passage, the sisters were hurrying into the chapel. The shouts of the intruders had ceased; they were in the kitchen and buttery, and had found their way to the cellar, and were regaling themselves with the wine, and greedily attacking the confections and preserves which they found there.

As Sybilla reached the bottom step of the stairs her strength failed, and she fell to the ground. Beatrice called for help, and two or three of the nuns returned from the chapel, and, assisted by them, she carried Sybilla into it.

"Lay me down in front of the altar," whispered the dying nun.

They laid her down, and closed the door, and listened eagerly. Some bent on their knees, and repeated their prayers; Beatrice sat down near Sybilla, and supported her head on her lap.

The silence continued.

It was a time of intense anxiety—eager listening for every sound—dread what might be the next—for all, except for Beatrice, whose whole attention was engrossed by Sybilla.

Suddenly a step was heard, but not of men. It was the Abbess.

"We are saved, my children! Deliverance has come, but the convent is on fire. We must hasten hence."

It had got wind in the village, that a set of idle

fellows, who only required an excuse to commit any outrage, had got hold of Count Julien's story, and were gone to disturb the convent.

The Protestant Pastor, in hot indignation, hastened to the Count, who had just arrived at the village inn, and inquired if he had sent any orders to the convent?

"None, none," said he; "I waited till I was recovered sufficiently myself to claim my daughter."

"I am afraid some mischief will be done. Some bad fellows have been seen about. There's that rascal Pierre Dimond, up to any villany, and making a cat's paw of that fool Blanc. Will you lend me your servants, Count, to follow them, and see what they are up to now?"

"To be sure," said the old man; "I will go also; my daughter is in the convent."

"Be sure, my Lord, they would take every care of her."

"No, no, my Lord," said Bernau; "you must rest after your journey; let me accompany the Pastor."

"By all means; the more the better, but not your Lordship; it would be labour in vain for you. I have got some steady men I can rely on."

Unless the Count had found it physically impossible for him to accompany the Pastor, he would not have been persuaded to remain behind; but his little strength was already exhausted, and he was compelled to wait in fidgetty impatience for Bernau's return.

The Pastor and his followers arrived at the convent not at all too soon. They found the doors open, and the rioters eating and drinking in the kitchen and cellar. In the effort to dislodge the intruders, a scuffle ensued, in which the Pastor's fists and tongue played no unimportant part. He collared several men, and flung them out of the convent, but one of his attendants, seeking to follow his example, found it no easy matter. While wrestling with a half-intoxicated ruffian, they both rolled against a stand of linen which happened to have been placed around the kitchen fire. The stand and linen fell into it, and the place was instantly in a blaze.

All was worse confusion than ever, while intruders and deliverers alike strove to escape from the volumes of smoke which arose from the burning linen. The flames quickly communicated themselves to the wooden benches and tables ; in fact, the whole convent was full of combustibles. The Abbess, who was keeping watch at the end of the passage that ran from the kitchen apartments to the chapel, caught a sight of the friendly and anxious face of the Protestant Pastor, who was well known to her.

"My good friend," he said, "run and fetch your nuns out of the convent. The kitchen is on fire—how can we put out the flames?"

"There are no means," said she ; "we have no resource whatever against fire. It must burn on."

"Run, call out your flock. We will care for them, and save what we can."

Having given the warning in the chapel above detailed, the energetic Abbess hurried off to her private apartments, to get the deeds of the convent, and the frightened nuns obeyed her commands, and rushed out of the chapel as fast as they had entered it.

The Pastor received them at the end of the passage, and placed his own men around them, and directed them to carry them safely to the valley, and to suffer no one to speak to or annoy them by the way.

M. Bernau stood by his side, vainly seeking Beatrice among the sisters. She remained in the chapel with the dying Sybilla.

The fire was rapidly extending. The passage, which formed the only entrance to the chapel, was already filling with smoke.

"Where, where is the Lady Beatrice?" inquired he, rushing after the retreating sisters.

"In the chapel with a dying nun," replied several voices.

"A dying nun!" exclaimed both the Pastor and the young man; and they hurried into the chapel.

The Abbess had no sooner secured her papers than she returned to them.

"Beatrice! Sister Mara!"

She was dead. She lay with her head on Bea-

trice's knees, an expression of perfect peace on her wasted features.

Beatrice bent over her, apparently insensible to all beside.

"Lady Beatrice," said Bernau, "this is madness. Fly, fly, or escape will be impossible."

She raised her head and recognised him.

The Pastor knelt down by the dead.

"She is gone, my child ; you can do her no good ; save thyself ; come—come to your father."

Awakened to a sense of danger by the smoke which had penetrated to the chapel, Beatrice quietly laid the head on the cold pavement, and imprinting a fervent kiss on the brow, rose mechanically.

Bernau seized her arm, and the Pastor supported the Abbess. They opened the passage door. Escape seemed impossible. It was densely filled with smoke, and at the end a blaze of fire was visible.

"It must be attempted," said the young man ; and lifting Beatrice in his arms, he struggled through the smoke, followed closely by the Pastor, who lifted the now insensible Abbess as if she were an infant.

A blazing beam, falling as they passed the last door, grazed the Pastor's arm, and singed the Abbess's dress ; the woollen materials of which it was composed saved her. They escaped ; but so blackened and disfigured by smoke that they were scarcely recognisable.

Close to a spring at a little distance from the burning convent, the thankful deliverers put down their burdens, and strove to recover the Abbess.

"Oh, she, too, is dead!" exclaimed Beatrice. "My aunt, my mother is gone!"

"She is not dead, she has only swooned. Quiet yourself, my poor child," said the Pastor, who, beneath an iron frame and stern exterior, concealed a heart as tender as any woman's.

His rough hands ministered to her as if he had been a nurse; and after the application of water from the spring, they had the delight of seeing a tinge of colour in her cheek, her white lips moved, and her eyes opened.

"Where am I, Beatrice?"

Beatrice was in tears.

"Only friends with you," was the Pastor's reply.

"You are safe, and your nuns are all saved likewise. But we must carry you to shelter."

The sight of the flames in the convent had awakened the anxieties of the whole population of the valley, and the narrow path was now filling with men and women anxious to afford every assistance. They had met the poor nuns in the charge of the servants of the Count. The women had clustered around them, and every householder was anxious to share the pleasure of giving them shelter.

The Pastor confided the Abbess and Lady Beatrice

to M. Bernau, and he, with the assistance of many ready villagers, conveyed them down to the village. The wife of the Bailli of the place met them on their way, and insisted on sheltering the Abbess. "Mine is the largest house," said she, "you must all take shelter with me." Her offer was accepted, and the Abbess soon found herself surrounded by nearly the whole sisterhood, all rejoicing in their escape, yet bitterly mourning the destruction of their home.

"Are you all here, my children? Where is Sister Angelica?" Angelica is missing. Who had seen her last?

The cry was raised. "Angelica is missing," spread through the village.

"Who? Which?" said the coarse-featured man who was prominent in the attack; "Sister Angelica! Is it she they used to call Sophie Weingarten?"

"Yes."

"Oh, she is not in the convent, I am sure; I saw her myself safe out of the fire."

Where could she be? The Bailli's wife suggested that she was sheltered in some other house, and begged the Abbess to be easy, and search should be made.

"Some were carried first to the Pastor's. Pray inquire there."

The Pastor's daughter was at home. Always for-

ward in assisting others, strange to say, on this occasion, she seemed most unwilling to admit any visitors into her house.

"Sophie Weimgarten?" replied she to the inquirer sent by the Bailli's wife; "what should I know of her? I expect the Lady Beatrice will want shelter here, and I must keep my best bed for her. I am very busy getting things ready against my father's return; he'll be pretty well tired out with this terrible work. Tell the Lady Abbess I'll be sure and bring her word if I see anything of Sister Angelica."

"The Lady Beatrice will be with her father," said the servant.

"As if they could all lodge in that small inn! Of course, she's there now; but the Count's suite will more than fill it. Come, don't detain me; I must go back to my father's dinner;" and she almost shut the door in the servant's face, who seemed disposed to enter.

Beatrice was with her father. Bernau had conducted her to the door of his chamber, and there left her. We will not venture to describe the meeting.

Meanwhile, the fire continued raging in the convent. Headed by the Pastor, who was everywhere at once, many of the windows were entered, and much property saved. The very men who had been foremost in causing the mischief, now did their best to repair it. Even the coarse-featured Pierre Dimond,

and the tall, good-looking fellow who had appeared one of the leaders, after running back, for some cause or other, to the village, had laboured like horses in saving the property.

At length the Pastor called loudly on all to retire from the building, and they all obeyed him.

They stood and watched the flames, now breaking out of every window, except in one part.

"The flames spare one part—what can that be?" said one.

"The chapel, the chapel!" said many voices.

"A miracle, a miracle!—the chapel will not burn."

"Hush, hush, you fools," said the Pastor, indignantly; "you are all born Papists, and half of you are Papists at heart still. A miracle! why, it's just this: the chapel was added outside the wall of the convent, and has no communication except through the door which leads from the lower passage. The roof even, only joins the stone wall, and none of the wooden beams of the house project into it. The door into the passage was plated with iron, and I closed it when I carried out the Abbess, to keep back the flames which the draught would have drawn towards us in making our escape. If the stone wall on that side stands, the chapel will remain uninjured; and I hope it may, for a poor dead sister lies there, whose last moments this wicked business disturbed."

He stopped, for the flames seemed to rise with re-

newed force, as if making a last mighty effort. The noise of falling within and without was incessant, and at length the wall on the side next the gazers bowed and tottered, and, with a mighty crash, the whole roof fell in, extinguishing the flames in the ruins they had made. Some pieces of the stone wall detached themselves on the side next the precipitous descent into the valley, and rolled down with accelerated force, crashing and rebounding in their descent, till they splashed into the astonished river below. There they lie, some of them at least, imbedded in the stream to the present day, the angry waters still foaming and dashing round them, yet unable to dislodge them from their deep bed.

Parts of the wall remained, but the wreck and destruction were complete, except of the chapel, which stood unscathed by the devouring element.

A perfect stillness succeeded the roar of the flames and the crashing of the timbers.

At length the Pastor spoke.

"Hear me, people: Let no one enter that chapel, till the nuns can return to pay the last duties to the sister who lies there. Respect the remains of the dead."

"We will, we will," rose from many voices.

"When the ruins have cooled—and I think there is an appearance of rain to help us before long—some of us will try and clear a way up to the chapel door,

through the house. It will be a work of time and danger, but we will do it as quickly as possible, that the poor thing within may have Christian burial."


"Now pile up these goods as closely together as possible;" for beds, and chairs, and tables, and stools, and clothes, and linen, were all lying in confusion around. "Fetch up some coarse cloths or matting to cover them; and here, you, Jacques, and you, Jean, and Paul, and two or three more, whom I can depend upon, you keep guard till we can get this property safely stowed somewhere; two of you take turn about."

"Shall I take a turn?" said Pierre Dimond, winking at Jean Blanc.

"You, you rascal!" roared the Pastor, turning fiercely on him. "You shall take your turn in a prison for this day's work, and Jean Blanc with you. What could have set your wicked heads on such an infernal scheme as this?"

"Please your reverence," said Jean, humbly, "you've often told us that monasteries and convents were but bad places at the best, and that all manner of evil has been done in them."

"And I said truly when I said so, and I will say it again. The very principle on which such places are founded is one which is contrary to the Word of God, and all manner of sin and wickedness has been committed within convent walls. But because you've too little brains to understand a godly sermon, does



that give me any right to deal you a blow on the head, and beat out the little you may have there? If all these women in the convent had been as bad as bad could be, would that have given you any right to come and rob them thus, and burn their house about their ears? 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.' We may safely leave judgment to Him; and, let me tell you, you're nothing better than a robber and a murderer for this day's work. A wicked fool you always were, and always will be, I'm afraid."

"We didn't mean to burn the house, only to frighten them a bit, and get the Lady Beatrice out, and give her to her father," said Blanc, sheepishly.

"Fools always will be meddling, as the wise man said. What possible business was it of yours? And, let me tell you, Blanc, and you, Pierre, I would advise all the young women in the valley to become nuns, if they could only get such husbands as you and he will make. Much better for them than marrying such do-nothing-but-mischief rascals as you are."

"We only helped the others," muttered Jean.

"Oh, I know, I know; it was nobody's fault, of course. Well, the commune will find out who's to pay the damage. I'm ashamed of you all. What's to become of these poor creatures you've deprived of house and home? Where can they live—how can they support themselves, I should like to know?

They may die of want, and then their blood will lie at your doors."

Jean slunk away ashamed, muttering, "William Collet was with us."

"William Collet!" said the Pastor; "not that quiet young soldier who has been hanging about here the last three months? I never heard a word against him before! Not William Collet!"

"Yes he was," answered many voices.

The Pastor lifted up his hands and eyes. "How full this wicked world is of deceivers! William Collet! The last man I should have suspected of such a deed!"

"I say, Lucy," said Pierre Dimond to a pretty young girl who stood listening eagerly to all the Pastor said, and colouring up to the eyes at his abuse of Pierre and Jean, "hadn't you better go and be a nun?"

"Why you see, Pierre," answered the damsel, laughing, "if you were much better than you are, you'd be too good for me, for the Pastor's always telling me I shall come to no good end."

CHAPTER XXXI.

UTTERLY exhausted, the Pastor descended into the valley; and after visiting the poor Abbess and her flock, and inquiring about Beatrice's safety, at a late hour in the evening he entered his own home. His daughter had been anxiously watching for him, and had prepared everything for his comfort. She made him change his scorched and torn garments, brought him water to wash off the marks of the fire from his face and hands, carefully dressed the slight wound in his arm, which, by neglect, had become painful; and then, seating him in his chair by the fire, and taking her own station on a stool at his feet, watched him while he eat and drank what she had provided for him.

Somewhat refreshed by his meal, he began to talk over the events of the day.

"Oh, Monica," said he, "as I look round on my home, and enjoy its comforts, I cannot bear to think of those poor homeless things from the convent. There's the Abbess, I know, has no other possible home. Several of the elder sisters loved it from

having lived there so many years under her gentle rule, and she is the most Protestant-like Papist I ever came across. She read her Bible herself, and let her nuns read it too. Then, there's little Susan Engelhart, and Sara le Noir, why, their mothers had nothing whatever to leave them, and the kind Abbess took them just to make a home for them; what's to become of them all?"

"Will not Government give them the pension?"

"I should hope they would, as they have done in other cases. The convent will never be rebuilt, and I cannot be sorry for that. I suppose there's some little property belonging to it; but it was very poor, I know. It was just dying a natural death, if these hot-headed fellows had not gone and put all to wrongs about it. It would naturally have fallen to pieces in a few years, as all convents will when no more girls will become nuns—which, of course, will be the case—as all our communes become more and more Protestant."

"Do you suppose any of these nuns will be glad to get out?" asked Monica.

"I don't know, Monica," said he, smiling; "what do you think?"

"Dear me, father, I should think they felt like birds out of a cage," replied she.

"Why, my bird, you would not have liked to be caged up there?"

"No, indeed," said she, kissing her father fondly.

"By the by, Monica, that William Collet, they say, was with the rioters—the steady, quiet fellow who has been lodging at Widow Vause's the last three months; he came to get health after his wounds, and attended church very regularly. I thought he was really a Christian man."

"Father," said Monica, "I've got a little tale to tell you. Will you be very kind and grant me one request?"

"What is it, my child?—anything in reason, you know."

"Hear my story first:

"That same William Collet was just about to be married to a very charming girl in his own village, when he was ordered off to foreign service. It nearly broke both their hearts to part. They couldn't write to each other, and the time of his return was delayed over and over again. But there was another woman in the place who also loved William. She was a cousin, and he had always been very friendly with her, and she fancied he had liked her; but he never did, except as a cousin. But she thought if the other were sent out of the way, he would turn to her. Well, they were all Papists, you know, in William's village, and his poor girl used to go every day and pray to the Virgin to watch over William, and bring him back again. William got a Bible in the army

from some good man there, who found him out, and had become a Protestant, but he did not write about it to her. So they went on, till one day news came that William was dead. He wasn't really dead ; but that wicked cousin managed to get the false news carried to his village, and the poor girl who was to be married to him never doubted it for a moment. I believe she got some hair, and something else that had belonged to him, conveyed to her. She was ill for ever such a long time. William's cousin nursed her, and seemed so kind to her, that the poor thing clung to her like a sister. They talked and talked together, and at last the poor broken-hearted creature resolved to become a nun, and, when William returned, she had actually done so, and taken all the vows."

"Why, Monica, I never heard such a tale, to be a true one."

"Quite true, every word. I don't know how William found out the wicked conduct of his cousin, but he did ; and a pretty state, you may be sure, he was in when he found it out. He came here at once."

"Here ? Why, was his lady-love in this convent ?" asked the Pastor.

"Ah, father," answered Monica, "you have found me out. She was : it was Sophie Weimgarten, whom they call Sister Angelica. Somehow he got a

note up to her, and she has been pining away ever since."

"Ah, ah, I see; but surely this was no excuse for his breaking into the convent," said the Pastor, sternly.

"When he found Pierre, and Jean, and others, so angry about Lady Beatrice's story," continued Monica, "and talking together about storming the convent, he thought if he could only see Sophie, she might be induced to—he hardly knew what; but to see her again was worth any risk. When they were all standing in front of the convent, she looked out at the portress's window and saw him, and she"——

"She didn't let them in?" said the Pastor, indignantly.

"No, no, father—indeed she didn't," said Monica, earnestly. "She said she felt so frightened for fear she should be tempted to break her vows, that she ran at once into the chapel, and there she stayed till the Abbess and the Pastor ordered them all out. Of course, William was on the watch, and she couldn't help running to him when they all rushed out of the smoking convent. In the hurry of the escape into the village, he drew her behind; and when the others went into the Bailli's, he brought her—don't be angry, father—in here. He had told me something of his tale before, and, father, I could not turn her out, could I?"

"No, no, child—to be sure not; but what can we do with her?" said the Pastor.

"Oh, father, that's my request. Just marry them here to-night, and he will take her off before daybreak to his friends to-morrow."

"My dear child, that is a serious matter," said the Pastor, half-amused and half-angry. "Upon my word, this is a pretty scrape. Marry a nun? Why, child, what are you thinking of?"

"Why, father, she never would have been a nun, except upon false pretences. She was pledged to William long before she was pledged to the convent, only she felt that his death broke her tie to him; but nothing else would have driven her into a convent."

"But does she wish it herself?" asked the Pastor.

"Oh, doesn't she, father!" said Monica. "Poor thing! but she's so frightened, and trembles at every sound. She looks so ill, and says she never told any one of his note; but that since she heard he was alive, it has been like a living death in the convent to her, and now she's once out of it, nothing should ever induce her to go back again."

"Where is she?" inquired the Pastor.

"She's in my room," replied Monica; "and William's hid in the back stable. They've been in here together, great part of the day; but I was so afraid of any one coming in and finding them. Do only see them, father."

Poor Sophie was brought in, blushing, and looking so very frightened, and yet so happy when she spoke of William. She was dressed in some clothes of Monica's. No one could have taken her for a nun ; and William came and pleaded very hard with the Pastor, and Sophie said little, but looked so very earnest, that the Pastor, feeling as he did the sinfulness of vows which God's Word does not authorise, could not but consent. But he could not help first giving Sophie a lively lecture on the nature of an oath, with a sort of fear that if she broke *one*, there was some chance she might break another. I cannot say she attended much to his sermon, but it did seem that she gave herself to William with all her heart ; and I believe the Pastor never joined two more loving hearts than on that occasion.

The Pastor's daughter had taken good care to supply them with food ; and, as soon as they were married, William returned to his lodgings, to make preparations for his departure. The old widow, with whom he had lodged, parted from him with regret, and said she feared he was not quite well of his wounds yet.

He told her he should be off so early in the morning, that he must wish her good-bye that night ; and he bade her farewell, with much regret on her side, and grateful courtesy on his. He spent the night by the Pastor's fireside, while Monica took the happy bride to

share her couch ; but the excitement of the two girls kept them both awake, and long before the sun rose, they were seated at the breakfast table ; and as his first beams tipped the rock above the blackened walls of the convent, the girls took a long and parting embrace, and Monica, after watching the happy pair as far down the road as she could see, could not help laying her head again upon her pillow, and the sun was high in the heavens when her father's voice awoke her from a refreshing sleep.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ON the following day the Count requested permission to call upon the Abbess, and he had a long, private conversation with her. Beatrice, quite overcome with the events of the last few hours, was confined to her bed in the village inn.

The Abbess returned with the Count to the bedside of her beloved niece, who threw herself into her arms.

“Oh, mother! I cannot bear to part with you!”

The Abbess pressed her affectionately to her heart.

“Sister Mara!—my dreams have been of her. There she lies on the cold pavement alone,” continued she.

“Think where her weary spirit is, my child. Oh, how thankful we should be to feel she is at rest!” replied the Abbess.

“Mother, her last words were whispered to me,” said Beatrice. “I hear them still. Listen—‘Peace,’ she said. ‘Tell Emmeline all is peace. Sybilla of Interlachen thanks her with her dying breath.’”

The Abbess started.

"Sybilla!" she said. "Was it Sybilla that I have loved and cherished? Thank God!" and she covered her face with her hands. "Was that all, my child?"

"No, mother," said Beatrice. "I caught the words—'Bid her tell Alfric, I forgive—I pray for him.'"

"Now God be praised indeed!" said the Abbess, bursting into tears. "He has conquered. Dear Sybilla, thou hadst indeed at length thy Saviour's spirit.—Any more, Beatrice?"

"'Dear Beatrice, Peace . . . in Christ.' These were her last words," replied the young girl, weeping in her turn.

"Ah, Beatrice, your heavenly Father has honoured you, my child. You have aided a weary pilgrim to find the narrow road," said the Abbess, kissing her fondly.

"Ah, mother, and how shall I walk in it myself, without you to guide me? Oh, I am so weak, so sure to fall!" said Beatrice.

"Stronger so, my Beatrice, than when confident of strength," replied the Abbess. "But do you really find me a help?"

"Do I? Oh, mother," said Beatrice, "you have saved my soul!"

"Guided you to the Saviour, you mean, my beloved one. Beatrice," added she, after a moment's silence, "I need not leave you: your father wishes me to ac-

company you to Soleure, and has offered me a home for life."

"And you will come?" said Beatrice, in an ecstasy of delighted surprise.

The Abbess replied with a kiss.

After a few moments' indulgence of the emotions which overpowered them both, she continued,—“I could never have quitted the convent, had it not been destroyed. I felt bound to the work I had undertaken. I could help my nuns to know their Saviour, but I have long returned to the views of my early life, and remained in the Catholic communion only because the times allowed me liberty to teach and act as I pleased in my own convent; but I can go to no other convent, and this will never be rebuilt. Government will give to each of the nuns a small pension; some will probably continue here, living in a separate house, under the Pastor's protection. To my two orphan girls, your father's kindness allows me to offer an asylum in his house. If any of the nuns wish to return to their own relations, they will now have the power of doing so. I go with you, my child.”

“You and Marie both?” said Beatrice. “Oh, joy, how far greater than I deserve!”

The Abbess left her with prayers and blessings, to prepare her nuns for the changes which she knew they would deeply feel.

In a few days the ruins were sufficiently cleared for

the nuns to enter the chapel. Beatrice accompanied them. Sybilla was found lying as Beatrice had left her. Death had restored much of the beauty of earlier years. She lay with an expression of perfect peace on her features, which had recovered something of the roundness and bright colour of youth—emblems of the new creation which had taken place within. She was buried in the burial-ground of the convent. Her funeral was the last religious service performed there. The fall of the convent, though it left the chapel standing, had made it so insecure that it was unfit for use ; and before many months had passed, it shared the fate of the rest of the building.

The ruins may be seen at the present day in the beautiful Val Moutiere.

The priest of the destroyed convent shortly arrived, with offers of another convent for the Abbess, where she might still be the head of her own sisterhood, and of others added to them.

To his unspeakable anger and mortification, the Abbess disclosed to him her intention of accompanying her brother to Soleure, and stated that the two orphan novices, who were not yet fully professed, had resolved to accompany her.

The arguments he used to shake her resolution, and the answers she gave, need not be detailed.

He left her, pronouncing a curse upon her. He carried off to an asylum not far distant several of the

elder nuns, who desired to shelter themselves again within convent walls. In spite of his presence, their parting with their beloved superior was a very touching one.

Two or three only of the younger sisters desired to return to their friends, and these had been sheltered by the Bailli before the priest's arrival, as they feared to see him. In a Protestant canton, the priest's fury at their defection was obliged to expend itself in words.

The agitating events which had followed each other in quick succession rendered some days' repose needful, before the enlarged party were able to set out on their journey to the castle of the Count.

The reception there given to them by Marie and Marien may be imagined.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“TO THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF TURIN.

“The message I have to deliver will be my sufficient excuse for writing to you. Your sister Sybilla died in the convent of which I was for many years the Abbess, three weeks since. Almost her last words were these :—‘ Bid Emmeline tell Alfric I forgive, I pray for him.’ Thus spoke Sybilla, and slept in Jesus. Alfric, God has enabled me also to forgive, as I hope to be forgiven. I know not if you will heed our forgiveness. May the Merciful look upon you for His Son’s sake.

“EMMELINE.”

This letter was delivered to the Cardinal Archbishop of Turin late one evening. The news of the massacre of St Bartholomew’s Day had arrived only that morning. The Duchess had shuddered and trembled. The Cardinal had been haughtily indignant at her presuming to doubt the justice and the wisdom of that detestable and atrocious crime, and all the bells of the city were ringing in honour of it.

"Who gave you this letter?" inquired the Cardinal of the page who brought it.

"A woman delivered it in to the porter, your Eminence, and immediately turned away."

The boy retired, and the Cardinal was alone. No! Could it be? Yes. It was her hand—the mother of his son. . . . Could she have heard that fearful tale? . . . No! Emmeline died happy in the belief that her guiltless child had escaped all the sins and woes of life, and stepped at once over time into a glorious eternity.

The Cardinal grew pale. Big drops stood on his forehead. The mother he hated. The boy he could never think of without emotion. At length he broke the seal and read. Did the words of holy forgiveness bring no softening pang to his hard heart? Not one. He could not love. He could not repent; he had hardened his heart too long. And now the human heart within him turned, as it were, to stone—and again he sat for the whole night as one transfixed. His attendants found him in the morning, and carried him to his bed—rigid and motionless. For a few days he lingered. Once or twice he strove to speak, but no words escaped his lips.

The Duchess sent daily to inquire after him. Her heart was heavy with grief. The city was in commotion. The ecclesiastics crowded round his dying bed.

At length the candles were lighted—extreme unc-

tion was administered. They crossed his hands upon his breast, and placed his mitre upon his head, and left him a breathless corpse. . . . A general mourning was ordered. The shops were closed from the day of his death to that of his interment. His funeral was magnificent. The pulpits of all the churches of the city rang with his praises.

There he lies in effigy on his beautiful tomb in the cathedral at Turin. Not harder or colder is the marble from which his similitude is carved than was his living human heart.

The highest honour which Rome can give her most devoted sons was not wanting. Some years after, he was canonised.

* * * * *

"Well, Marie, what shall I say to Monsieur Bernau's proposal?" said the Count to his daughter, as they walked up and down the terrace in front of the castle.

She turned away her head and blushed.

"Ah, Marie, perhaps you have told him yourself, my child?"

She threw herself into her father's arms, and hid her face on his shoulder.

"God's best blessing be on you, my precious Marie—your mother's God, . . . my sweet one."

They were married. The Pastor D'Albret joined

their hands. Their home was in Germany, whence, however, they returned every year for two or three months, as long as the Count's life was spared.

Marien could not leave her foster-child, and Marie's children were brought up upon her knee; and, as is narrated in the Book of Genesis of Rebecca's nurse, many were the tears shed over her grave, when she died at a good old age.

Beatrice never married. She was the stay and comfort of her father's declining years, and of the Abbess's decaying bodily strength.

She closed the eyes of both.

Of the orphans under the Abbess's care, one married—the other continued Beatrice's attached servant and devoted companion.

Beatrice declined a home in her sister's house, though from time to time she spent many weeks under her roof, and was idolised by her sister's children.

Her life was devoted to the service of the sick and the needy. She educated the young, and comforted the old. She was still in the prime of life when the welcome summons came that called her home.

Her sins were forgiven—she departed in PEACE.

THE END.











